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SELECTED ESSAYS

(SECOND SERIES)

by

SIR EDMUND GOSSE

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THE CARPET AND THE CLOCK

THE CARPET AND THE CLOCK

FROM the list of Mr. George Moore's works, which is printed opposite the title of his new volume, *Avowals*, published in 1919, is omitted. If this is an accident, it is an unfortunate one, for these two books are closely allied, and serve to explain one another. They form a section of Mr. Moore's authorship by themselves, and they present his bland and undaunted figure in a new atmosphere. We are accustomed to meet with this novelist on the Parisian boulevards, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, in the recesses of the Wicklow Hills, by Irish lake or Provençal orchard or garret of the Boul' St. Mich', but always far from home, always in exile, always garrulous in lonely places.

In *Avowals* and now in *Conversations in Ebury Street*, we see him for the first time at home. No secret is withdrawn from our scrutiny. We learn that he lives in Pimlico, in a certain street, at a certain number. At that house he receives, or pretends to receive, various living persons of more or less prominence in letters, and with them, or with their unresisting wraiths, he carries on vehement and artless dialogues on subjects connected with literature. In the course of these dialogues Mr. George Moore invariably gets the best of the argument, but the dummies have

nothing else to complain of. He treats them with the utmost courtesy, and tells stories about their private life with no less nonchalance than if he were feeding them with custard.

In the course of each of these unsolicited interviews Mr. Moore draws the attention of the visitor to two pieces of furniture. He is proud—justly proud—of an Aubusson Carpet and of a Lyre-shapen Clock. It is a matter of etiquette for the visitor to look on the floor and exclaim, " So this is the Aubusson Carpet ! And can that be the Lyre-shapen Clock ? " The interview thus started, invariably proceeds to a harmonious close. The penates are appeased ; the rigour of the game has been preserved. The objects I have mentioned will, fifty years hence, form the central attraction of the George Moore Museum to countless visitors. At present they are reserved for a selected few, but they animate the text of the *Conversations*. In each of the dialogues—there are nineteen of these, more or less—we feel that our shoes are planted on the Carpet, and our eyes, if for a moment they quit the features of Mr. Moore, are fixed upon the Clock. With modest pride I may mention that of all the visitors introduced, I am the only one who has been able to drag Mr. Moore from his arm-chair. In Dialogue XVI., I am astounded at my own audacity in leading Mr. Moore to " a pleasant seat " by " a lake at the other end " of " some gardens." But the triumph is a physical, not a spiritual, one. In the discussion which ensues (if discussion it can be called

when one party incessantly agrees with Mr. Moore) the atmosphere is exactly that of 121 Ebury Street. The turf at our feet is the Aubusson Carpet, and the "handsome beech-tree" above our heads no other than the Lyre-shapen Clock.

A genuine originality may be admitted for the critical method pursued in *Avowals*, and with still greater audacity in *Conversations*. But it is not quite the originality claimed by Mr. Moore, who bases his appeal on that of Landor, whom he proposes to imitate, and of whom he speaks as though no dialogues but the Landorian had ever been produced. Yet an army of illustrious Greeks had been followed by author after author before Landor began to pour out the stores of his reading and his reflection in the shape we know so well. The eighteenth century had delighted in the dialogue, and Bishop Berkeley, in the famous passage of his *Hylas and Philonous*, where the fox-hunters ride by under the terrace where the philosophers are seated, comes closer to Mr. Moore than Landor does. Mr. Moore is an idolater of Landor; he prefers him to Shakespeare, in so many words; and in this he resembles Landor himself, who says of his own *Imaginary Conversations*, that they contain "as forcible writing as exists on earth." Something of the same kind was said seventy years ago by admirers of Helps' *Friends in Council*, a book of dialogues no longer read with much exhilaration.

But the originality of Mr. Moore's *Conversations* does not exist in their being written

dramatically, but in the nature of their treatment. What is new in these pages is their curious emancipation from all the traditional bonds of criticism. They run hilariously from theme to theme, they lay down the law with complete irresponsibility, they make no reference whatever to tradition or principle or accepted rule. They record, with unprecedented rawness, the impact of masterpieces on an impulsive mind. The result is exceedingly interesting, because the mind of Mr. Moore is the very original mind of a highly gifted man. But I confess that its vagaries bewilder me. It will be remembered that Dr. Johnson, who highly esteemed Poll Carmichael, nevertheless complained that when he talked to her "tightly and closely," she "was wiggle-waggle, and I never could persuade her to be categorical." That is the case with Mr. Moore; he cannot be persuaded to be categorical. He is pre-eminently "wiggle-waggle."

If the reader is resolved not to be made angry by Mr. Moore's critical extravagances, he will find them very diverting. They will probably not amuse his imaginary interlocutors, such as Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mr. Cunninghame Graham, and Mr. Granville Barker. They cannot but be disconcerted to find themselves dragged at the tail of Mr. Moore's fiery chariot. If I were not a philosopher, I might myself resent the surprising opinions with which I am credited. Mr. John Freeman, who, besides being an accomplished poet, is a sound and liberal critic, will certainly be shocked to see attributed to him the opening line of

page 87. When Mr. Moore—for it is all Mr. Moore, whatever distinguished visitor pretends to utter a reply—when Mr. Moore praises, he speaks the language of generous hyperbole. But when he blames, and he blames too readily and too recklessly, his hyperbole is not at all generous. He is unable to see merit in the most honoured names in his department of our profession. Why ?

I think the reason is to be sought in Mr. Moore's almost infantile candour. To attribute his judgements of Conrad and Henry James and Mr. Thomas Hardy to jealousy would be to fall into a coarse and baseless error. Perhaps no novelist ever quite sincerely admires the work of another leading novelist, and for a reason which is worth bearing in mind. To the ordinary reader the main affair is the entertainment to be found in the story. But the novelist, if he be a man of any genius, is an artist. He has his own theory of approach, his own methods of construction. When he begins to read a novel by a fellow-artist, his first impression is that if he himself had the material in hand he would treat it quite differently. The further he penetrates the work of his rival, the more conscious he is of this dislocation, until he throws down the book in disgust, simply because it is not conducted as he himself would conduct it. Other novelists politely conceal this instinctive repulsion ; Mr. Moore is constitutionally unable to conceal anything.

It will be regrettable if these exhibitions of flightiness prevent us from appreciating the merits

of Mr. Moore's writing. It was never more vivid or more individual than in the present instance. Not to recognise in Mr. Moore one of the finest living writers of English prose is to fall a victim to a prejudice as peevish as his own. His recollections of French scenes and persons occur frequently, and are invariably marked by that sinuous intensity, that long-drawn punctilious observation which is characteristic of his admirably personal style. " Is not every memory intermittent ? " he pertinently remarks ; and it is in the record of these broken scenes that Moore excels. " We spoke of other things, myself holding forth," he says on one page, and could anything be better descriptive of the manner he affects and adorns ?

But I must come to close quarters with the portion of *Conversations in Ebury Street* which it is most difficult to analyse with judgement. I mean the singular gallery of " portraits " which occupy a space of eighty pages in the centre of the book. Mr. Freeman and Mr. de la Mare have been paying a visit to 121 Ebury Street, and the time has come when they are dismissed from the Presence. Mr. Moore, who has been giving to their remarks only " a semblance of attention," now points to the Lyre-shapen Clock and bids them depart. They are to return to discuss Wordsworth, asparagus, and grouse. For an hour or more Mr. Moore will be alone—alone upon the Aubusson Carpet. In that solitude there will crowd upon him the dear remembered faces of eminent artists with whom he was once intimate,

and who seem to welcome him no more. We wonder at that! But without a vestige of resentment he paints their figures, repeats their words, betrays their innocent foibles, and belauds their talents, until, one by one, they rise before us in all their naked majesty. Every victim is still alive. How does each appreciate this searching portraiture? Probably not so much as we strangers may enjoy the powerful brush-work and the unflinching impressionism.

The customary phrases die upon our lips as we try to define the action of Mr. Moore. Reticence, privacy, reserve—what have these to do with the revelations of Ebury Street? If there were the slightest tincture of ill-nature, so much as the twinkling of a tail or the whisper of a hiss, we should denounce the serpent and be all on fire with indignation. But how are we to face an innocency which resembles nothing so much as Sterne's naked infant rolling on the carpet—the Aubusson Carpet under the Lyre-shapen Clock? Not only does Mr. Moore mean no harm by his indiscretions, but he has no idea what it is to be discreet.

The conception of such a quality is not present to his mind. If he betrays the embarrassments of a friend who is widely known and still moving among us, it is because his plastic sense has been violently affected by the circumstances in question, and because he cannot imagine a social state in which the misfortunes of the living are not as much the property of the public as are Desdemona's

little accident with the handkerchief or the surprising bloodiness of King Lear. He pays his acquaintances the compliment of treating them as though they were imaginary personages described by some genius of three hundred years ago. "Out of these, create he can, forms more real than living man," as Shelley says, because to Mr. Moore life is only interesting when it can be translated into literature, and the literary aspect of a fact or a situation is infinitely more actual to him than its attitude to the wilderness of useless instances which we call life.

If we would explain why Mr. George Moore, while apparently breaking every law of decency and every rule of good conduct, is still never detestable and rarely disagreeable, we must largely attribute it to his imaginative candour. He is making pictures the whole time; why should anyone be vexed at having served as model to so marvellous a portrait-painter?

1924.

A POET IN PRISON

A POET IN PRISON

THE SHEPHEARDS HUNTING: *being Certain Eglogues written during the time of the Authors Imprisonment in the Marshalsey. By George Wyther, Gentleman. London, printed by W. White for George Norton, and are to be sold at the signe of the red-Bull neere Temple-barre.* 1615.

IF ever a man needed resuscitation in our antiquarian times it was George Wither. When most of the Jacobean poets sank into comfortable oblivion, which merely meant being laid with a piece of camphor in cotton-wool to keep fresh for us, Wither had the misfortune to be recollected. He became a byword of contempt, and the Age of Anne persistently called him Withers, a name, I believe, only possessed really by one distinguished person, Cleopatra Skewton's page-boy. Swift, in *The Battle of the Books*, brings in this poet as the meanest common trooper that he can mention in his modern army. Pope speaks of him with the utmost freedom as "wretched Withers." It is true that he lived too long and wrote too much—a great deal too much. Mr. Hazlitt gives the titles of more than one hundred of his publications, and some of them are wonderfully unattractive. I should not like to be shut up on a rainy day with his *Salt upon Salt*, which seems to have lost its savour, nor do I yearn to blow upon his *Tuba*

Pacifica, although it was "disposed of rather for love than money." The truth is that good George Wither lost his poetry early, was an upright, honest, and patriotic man who unhappily developed into a scold, and got into the bad habit of pouring out "precautions," "cautional expressions," "prophetic phrensies," "epistles at random," "personal contributions to the national humiliation," "passages," "raptures," and "allarums," until he really became the greatest bore in Christendom. It was Charles Lamb who swept away this whole tedious structure of Wither's later writings and showed us what a lovely poet he was in his youth.

When the book before us was printed, George Wither was aged twenty-seven. He had just stepped gingerly out of the Marshalsea Prison, and his poems reveal an amusing mixture of protest against having been put there at all and deprecation of being put there again. Let no one waste the tear of sensibility over that shell of the Marshalsea Prison, which still, I believe, exists. The family of the Dorrits languished in quite another place from the original Marshalsea of Wither's time, although that also lay across the water in Southwark. It is said that the prison was used for the confinement of persons who had spoken lewdly of dignitaries about the Court. Wither, as we shall see, makes a great parade of telling us why he was imprisoned; but his language is obscure. Perhaps he was afraid to be explicit. In 1613 he had published a little volume of satires,

called *Abuses stript and whipt.* This had been very popular, running into six or seven editions within a short time, and someone in office, no doubt, had fitted on the fool's cap. Five years later the poor poet would have had a chance of being shipped straight off to Virginia, as a " debauched person " ; as it was, the Marshalsea seems to have been tolerably unpleasant. We gather, however, that he enjoyed some alleviations. He could say, like Leigh Hunt, " the visits of my friends were the bright side of my captivity ; I read verses without end, and wrote almost as many." The poems we have before us were written in the Marshalsea. The book itself is very tiny and pretty, with a sort of leafy trellis-work at the top and bottom of every page, almost suggesting a little posy of wild-flowers thrown through the iron bars of the poet's cage, and pressed between the pages of his manuscript. Nor is there any book of Wither's which breathes more deeply of the perfume of the fields than this which was written in the noisome seclusion of the Marshalsea.

Although the title-page assures us that these " eglogues " were written during the author's imprisonment, we may have a suspicion that the first three were composed just after his release. They are very distinct from the rest in form and character. To understand them we must remember that in 1614, just before the imprisonment, Wither had taken a share with his bosom friend, William Browne, of the Inner Temple, in bringing out a

little volume of pastorals, called *The Shepherd's Pipe*. Browne, a poet who deserves well of all Devonshire men, was two years younger than Wither, and had just begun to come before the public as the author of that charming, lazy, Virgilian poem of *Britannia's Pastorals*. There was something of Keats in Browne, an artist who let the world pass him by; something of Shelley in Wither, a prophet who longed to set his seal on human progress. In the *Shepherd's Pipe* Willy (William Browne) and Roget (Geo-t-r) had been the interlocutors, and Christopher Brooke, another rhyming friend, had written an eclogue under the name of Cutty. These personages reappear in *The Shepherd's Hunting*, and give us a glimpse of pleasant personal relations. In the first "eglogue," Willy comes to the Marshalsea one afternoon to condole with Roget, but finds him very cheerful. The prisoner poet assures his friend that

> This barren place yields somewhat to relieve,
> For I have found sufficient to content me.
> And more true bliss than ever freedom lent me;

and Willy goes away, when it is growing dark, rejoiced to find that "the cage doth some birds good." Next morning he returns and brings Cutty, or Cuddy, with him, for Cuddy has news to tell the prisoner that all England is taking an interest in him, and that this adversity has made him much more popular than he was before. But Willy and Cuddy are extremely anxious to know

what it was that caused Roget's imprisonment, and at last he agrees to tell them. Hitherto the poem has been written in *ottava rima*, a form which is sufficiently uncommon in our early seventeenth-century poetry to demand special notice in this case. In a prose postscript to this book Wither tells us that the title, *The Shepherd's Hunting*, which he seems to feel needs explanation, is due to the stationer, or, as we should say now, to the publisher. But perhaps this was an afterthought, for in the account he gives to Willy and Cuddy he certainly suggests the title himself. He represents himself as the shepherd given up to the delights of hunting the human passions through the soul ; the simile seems a little confused, because he represents these qualities not as the quarry, but as the hounds, and so the story of Actæon is reversed ; instead of the hounds pursuing their master, the master hunts his dogs. At all events, the result is that he " dips his staff in blood, and onwards leads his thunder to the wood," where he is ignominiously captured by his Majesty's gamekeeper. But the allegory hardly runs upon all-fours.

The next " eglogue " represents again another visit to the prisoner, and this time Willy and Cuddy bring Alexis with them ; perhaps Alexis is John Davies, of Hereford, another contributor to *The Shepherd's Pipe*. Roget starts his allegory again, in the same mild, satiric manner he had adopted, to his hurt, in *Abuses stript and whipt*. Wither becomes quite delightful again, when cheerfulness

breaks through this satirical philosophy, and when he tells us :

> But though that all the world's delight forsake me,
> I have a Muse, and she shall music make me ;
> Whose aery notes, in spite of closest cages,
> Shall give content to me and after ages.

They all felt certain of immortality, these cheerful poets of Elizabeth and James, and Prince Posterity has seen proper to admit the claim in more instances than might well have been expected.

But the delightful part of *The Shepherd's Hunting* has yet to come. With the fourth " eglogue " the caged bird begins to sing like a lark at Heaven's gate, and it is the prisoned man—who ought to be in doleful dumps—that rallies his free friend Browne on his low spirits. It is time, he says, to be merry :

> Coridon, with his bold rout,
> Hath already been about,
> For the elder shepherd's dole,
> And fetched in the summer pole ;
> Whilst the rest have built a bower
> To defend them from a shower,
> Sealed so close, with boughs all green,
> Titan cannot pry between ;
> Now the dairy-wenches dream
> Of their strawberries and cream,
> And each doth herself advance,
> To be taken in to dance.

What summer thoughts are these to come from a pale prisoner in the hot and putrid Marshalsea ! They are either symptoms of acute nostalgia, or proofs of a cheerfulness that lifts their author above

a mortal pitch. But Willy declines to join the Lady of the May at her high junketings ; he also has troubles, and prefers to whisper them through Roget's iron bars. There are those who " my Music do contemn," who will none of the poetry of Master William Browne of the Inner Temple. It is useless for him to wrestle with brown shepherds for the

> Cups of turnèd maple-root,
> Whereupon the skilful man
> Hath engraved the Loves of Pan,

or contend for the " fine napkin wrought with blue," if those base clowns called critics are busy with his detraction. But Roget instructs him that Verse is its own high reward, that the songs of a true poet will naturally arise like the moon out of and beyond all racks of envious cloud, and that the last thing he should do is to despair. He rises to his own greatest and best work in this encouragement of a brother-poet, and no one who reads such noble verses as these dare question Wither's claim to a *fauteuil* in the Academy of Parnassus :

> If thy Verse do bravely tower
> As she makes wing, she gets power,
> Yet the higher she doth soar,
> She's affronted still the more ;
> Till she to the high'st hath past,
> Then she rests with Fame at last.
> Let nought therefore thee affright,
> But make forward in thy flight ;
> For if I could match thy rhyme
> To the very stars I'd climb,
> There begin again, and fly
> Till I reached Eternity.

In the fifth "eglogue" Roget and Alexis compare notes about their early happiness in phrases of an odd commixture. The pastoral character of the poetry has to be carried out, and so we read of how Roget on a great occasion played a match at football, "having scarce twenty Satyrs on his side," against some of "the best tried Ruffians in the land." Great Pan presided at that match by the banks of Thames, and though the satyrs and their laureate leader were worsted, the moral victory, as people call it, remained with the latter. All this is an allegory; and indeed we walk in the very shadow of innuendo all through *The Shepherd's Hunting*.

The moral of the whole thing is that eternal ditty of tuneful youth: All for Verse and the World well lost. The enemy is around them on all sides, jailers of the Marshalsea and envious critics, the evil shepherds that preside over grates of steel and noisome beds of straw, but Youth has its mocking answer to all these:

> Let them disdain and fret till they are weary!
> We in ourselves have that shall make us merry;
> Which he that wants and had the power to know it,
> Would give his life that he might die a poet.

It was no small thing to be suffering for Apollo's sake in 1614. Shakespeare might hear of it at Stratford, and talk of the prisoner as he strolled with some friend on the banks of Avon. A greater than Shakespeare—as most men thought in those days—Ben Jonson himself, might talk the

matter over "at those lyric feasts, Made at the Sun, the Dog, the triple Tun"; for had not he himself languished in a worse dungeon and under a heavier charge than Wither? To be seven-and-twenty, to be in trouble with the Government about one's verses, and to have other young poets, in a ferment of enthusiasm, clinging like swallows to the prison-bars—how delicious a torment! And to know that it will soon be over, and that the sweet, pure meadows lie just outside the reek of Southwark, that summer lingers still and that shepherds pipe and play, that Fame is sitting by her cheerful fountain with a garland for the weary head, and that lasses, "who more excell Than the sweet-voic'd Philomel," are ready to cluster round the interesting captive, and lead him away in daisy-chains—what could be more consolatory! And we close the little dainty volume, with its delicate perfume of friendship and poetry and hope.

WYCHERLEY

WYCHERLEY

JUSTICE is slowly being done to our classics of the end of the seventeenth century, and by no one more effectively than by Mr. Montague Summers. The record of this distinguished scholar is indeed already remarkable. We owe to him the first complete and accurate text of Buckingham, of Aphra Behn, and, still more important, of Congreve. But I am not sure that his latest effort, which lies before me in four quarto volumes, nobly produced by the Nonesuch Press, is not the most praiseworthy, as I think it must have been the most laborious of all.

The nineteenth century fought very shy of Wycherley, whose savage roughness alarmed all but the most dauntless critics, and the consequence was a timorous neglect of works which could not be despised, but were heartily disliked. Victorian criticism kept warily at a distance, as though Wycherley had been a tiger on a leash. The present generation, less squeamish than its predecessors, and with a kind of natural hankering after truculence, welcomes a Plain Dealer; and the recent successful performances of one of Wycherley's plays has proved that they are after all more witty than terrible. Let us not, however, fall into the opposite error, and deck out our beast of prey with bows of pink riband. Wycherley is a

formidable figure, not very lovable, often not very supportable, a sort of Timon gnashing his teeth among the frolic poets ; but he stands in front of them all in the matter of sheer strength, of resolute and unflinching realism.

It is characteristic that we know a good deal about Wycherley, but almost all of it in the form of more or less violent anecdote. He came of an ancient and honourable family, long settled at Clive Hall, in Shropshire, where he was born in the winter of 1640. Mr. Summers, in his thorough way, gives an elaborate pedigree of the Wycherleys, which I must pass over, being interested only in the playwright. At the age of fifteen (according to Dennis, who was his friend) William was sent "for education to the western part of France, either to Saintonge or to the Angoumais." I take this to mean that he went first to La Rochelle and afterwards to Angoulême.

He was very handsome, as his portraits testify, and he was received into the best provincial society ; more than that, he appears to have been the only Englishman ever admitted into what remained of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet, where Mme. de Montausier still remembered the glorious days when all the best poets of France wove for her the Garland of Julie.

It is almost impossible that Wycherley failed to meet Des Réaux, tranquilly and secretly adding story by story to his *Historiettes*, but if so the memoir-writer missed the chance of forging a link between French and English literature by pre-

serving an impression of "le petit Huguenot." The five years of his youth which Wycherley spent in France exercised a powerful influence over his genius; he is the most French—with the France of the *ruelles galantes* of 1650—of all the English writers of the seventeenth century. To the effect of this early experience upon Wycherley's verse I will return in a moment.

The boy of fifteen left England a Protestant and became a Catholic in France, returning to the church of his native land when he came back as a man to England in 1659. Mr. Summers, who has a regrettable detestation of the Puritans, suggests that Wycherley felt "a little ridiculous" at being a Protestant in a Catholic country, and talks of the "dour ferocity" of the Huguenots. But Wycherley, in 1655, would not have been among Catholics at La Rochelle, where the leading families still belonged to the Reformed Religion. Moreover, there was no "dour ferocity" among the Protestants of France in 1650; they had become no less pleasure-loving and luxurious than their Catholic neighbours.

Mr. Summers should read the account of the annual Protestant conference at Charenton; there was no blight of the "Nonconformist conscience" over that lively ceremony. "De carrosse à carrosse, c'étaient lutte d'élégance et de pompe, conversations mondaines, rires et minauderies." The future author of *The Country Wife* would have resented nothing irksome in the "fastueux" Sundays of the Protestants of Saintonge. But

when he moved to Angoulême he would fin
himself in a Catholic atmosphere of very muc
the same frivolity and intrigue, wit and parade
Through his whole life Wycherley shows n
interest at all in religion; he is profoundl
irreligious. He would suffer no inconvenienc
among Protestants in La Rochelle, none amon
Catholics at Angoulême, none in the Establishe
Church in England. He was an intellectua
Vicar of Bray, and cared for none of those things

According to Anthony à Wood, Wycherle
became a fellow-commoner of Queen's College
Oxford, in July 1660, but "departed" without an
further observation of university statutes. We ar
further told that he "became a sojourner in Oxo
for the sake of the Public Library," but also tha
he might be "reconciled" by Dr. Barlow to th
Protestant religion. This vague remark provoke
an astonishing tirade from Mr. Summers, wh
says that Wycherley "evidently" quitted Oxfor
in some disgust. I see no "evidence" of this, bu
Mr. Summers is betrayed by it into half a page o
the most unmeasured invective against poor D
Barlow, whom he actually calls a "thoroughl
despicable and unworthy character." Barlo
was librarian of the Bodleian, though Mr. Summe
does not say so, and he was admittedly "an un
versal lover and favourer of learned men of wha
country or denomination soever." He was
strong Calvinist, indeed, and not a very courageou
politician, and he was crazy about Popery, but M
Summers's abuse of him seems uncalled for.

I hope Mr. Summers will forgive me if I say that his violent prejudice against Puritanism is a defect which I should be glad to see excised from his writings. I am no lover of Puritanism myself, but to drag in attacks upon it on every possible (or impossible) occasion savours of a lack of historical philosophy. It marred, to my mind, Mr. Summers's notes on Congreve. It is still more disagreeably prominent in his treatment of Wycherley. What is the sense of railing against "red-hot ranters" in an essay on *The Country Wife*? Mr. Summers must know that we should be in even worse case to-day than we are had the Puritans never made their protest in favour of morals and piety.

Let us turn, however, to what is really important, the dramatic work which Mr. Summers has so ably edited. In his extreme old age Wycherley made a "confident and complaisant remark" to Pope, which Mr. Summers closely examines, but the importance of which I think he hardly realises. The dramatist told his youthful friend that he had written his four comedies at a very early age; he even stated the exact date of each. He said that *Love in a Wood*, produced in 1672, had been composed in 1659, *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1673) in 1661, *The Plain Dealer* (1677) in 1663, and *The Country Wife* (1675) in 1665. Mr. Summers has no difficulty in showing that each of these plays contains references to an event later than the date which Pope reports. (But these may have been,

surely, interpolated just before the performance ?) What gives gravity to the pretension is that if we admit it we have to give Wycherley a claim to precedence in the history of comedy which he cannot otherwise deserve. In England it puts him before Etherege and before Dryden, both of whom, by the ordinary chronology, he follows.

But what is more serious is that it puts him on an exact level with Molière. Are we to believe that *Love in a Wood* was antecedent to the whole series of comedies, starting in 1659 with *Les Précieuses Ridicules* ? The suggestion is absurd, unless we are prepared to acknowledge in Wycherley one of the supreme dramatic artists of the world. With all admiration of his gifts, this is impossible. My own theory is that Wycherley did make the claim which Mr. Summers doubts, and that he made it from vanity, vexed at its being so freely said that he followed Molière. Further back than 1659 he did not dare to go, but that was enough to support an entire independence of the influence of Molière. If he were in the west of France in 1658, it seems more than possible that Wycherley may have witnessed one or more of the performances given by Molière's troupe of actors while they wandered over France before settling at the Palais Royal. A very small spark would be enough to set fire to a theatrical faculty so inflammable as Wycherley's. But that, somehow, his talent was started by Molière's genius must be believed, Pope or no Pope.

It is comparatively little known that, besides his

four famous comedies in prose, Wycherley wrote a vast amount of miscellaneous verse. This was not admired, even in his lifetime, and has never till now been reprinted. Mr. Summers has shown courage in editing it all, because he wished his edition to be complete, as an editor should. But from another point of view Wycherley's poems are welcome to the student. It is true that he lacked the poet's art, but, as was said of Oldham (but not with Oldham's excuse), " through the harsh cadence of a rugged line " Wycherley constantly reveals the bias of his genius and that robust anger which made him the executioner of the fops and fine ladies. The prose preface to the collection of 1704, addressed to that " Malicious, Envious, Captious Coxcomb, O Damned, Damning Reader," is an amazing revelation of the author's temper.

No one, not Swift at his fiercest, railed upon his public as Wycherley did. The very titles of his poems suggest sketches for new " Plain Dealers " and still more reckless " Country Wives." Here are examples taken at random : " To a Sickly, Peevish yet Ambitious, Vain Malcontent " ; " To an Affected, Proud Jilt " ; " To a Lewd Woman of Affected Modesty " ; " To a Conceited Mistress." The poems are all of this order, brutal invectives in rough, galloping verse, mostly heroic ; they all reveal that scornful revulsion against society, as of one who had drained it to the lees and found them bitter, which makes Wycherley so unique in our dramatic world.

The reader, and no doubt the spectator, of

Wycherley's plays must experience an uneasy feeling that he is not witnessing a scene of life which actually existed, except within a very restricted circle, in the England of 1670. Etherege gives us the genuine aspect of " high life," and Shadwell the shadow of low life, but Wycherley seems to move in a foreign atmosphere. The social manners he describes are much more those of Paris as he left it than of London as he found it. In the salon of Julie de Montausier he must have met the " peevish captious wits " and " handsome young women, who lov'd play, and sitting up at cards a nights." He gave them British names, and put rude, daring English speech into their mouths, but they were French in essence. Therefore, when he came to write his *Plain Dealer* he was tempted to give his own observation and hardihood the very colour of Molière's *Misanthrope*.

Perhaps *The Country Wife* is the better play, as it is certainly the more English of the two, and the more humane, the less absolutely brutal. But for that very reason it is not so characteristic as *The Plain Dealer*, where this playwright seems to roar with satiric passion. And we come back to France and to the *Miscellany Poems*, where the accent is not so much that of the London of Charles II. as of the academic *ruelles* of Paris, with their inveterate pursuit of female frailty, their cruel wit, sparing neither friend nor foe, their total absence of sentimentality, their sophisticated " critiques " of everything in heaven and hell.

Mr. Summers has recovered a lost mock-epic of "Hero and Leander," evidently belonging to Wycherley's youth. It is a rather horrible burlesque in the manner of Scarron, and would have been appreciated at the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

These rambling remarks must, however, be brought to a close; there is meat enough on the raw bones of Wycherley to load many a critical table. His expressed ideal was *The World Unmask'd*, and he did his business so roughly that the sufferer stopped up both her ears. As his highly respectable contemporary, John Evelyn, wrote:

> As long as Men are false and Women vain,
> Whilst Gold continues to be Virtue's Bane,
> In pointed Satire *Wycherley* shall reign.

He was not long on the throne, however, before he was exiled by a revolution of sentiment. There is talk of a restoration now, and it will be forwarded by Mr. Summers's labour. The conspiracy of neglect is over, and the savage playwright can at last be read in his entirety by all who can endure his snarl and his hot breath.

A DOG WITH A BAD NAME

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THE shadows were beginning to close around the Ancien Régime when, in 1782, a long romance, strictly anonymous, appeared in the bookshops of Paris. It was called *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and in its outward form, as well as somewhat in its inward essence, it was modelled upon Richardson's *Clarissa*, French admiration of which, in Provost's translation, had grown, as M. Texte says, to infatuation. But from the first the new novel created a scandal, and its name has grown to be a byword for literary infamy. It bore a motto from Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*—"I have observed the manners of my time, and I have published these letters," so that the legend speedily sprang up that they were genuine documents.

When it became known that the author was a certain Choderlos de Laclos, a captain of artillery attached to the Duke of Orléans, it was confidently whispered that these were letters from living persons which he had stolen when he was in garrison at Grenoble. There was no truth in this; the book was entirely a work of imagination, but it was closely studied from life, and it awakened not less resentment than curiosity. Both have continued almost to this day, and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* has been treated as a shameful book,

outside the pale of literature and unworthy of critical attention. Very little has been written about it in France, and practically nothing in English, although it has been abundantly read and reprinted. It has been a pariah to the critics. When Mr. Saintsbury wrote his excellent volumes on the French Novel, he did not mention *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and he was naïvely reproached with having "forgotten" it. Mr. Saintsbury never "forgets" anything, but he did not choose to remember it.

Such is the remarkable work of fiction which an accomplished scholar has now ventured to introduce for the first time to English readers. Mr. Aldington, to whom we already owe an excellent translation of Cyrano de Bergerac (the original, not Rostand's renovation), has given close attention to Choderlos de Laclos's plain and nervous language and he has prefixed to his translation a well-considered biography. We have here at last a Laclos, not exactly whitewashed, but explained and made credible. The monster of legend is slain, which is a very different thing from saying that *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is what ladies call "nice."

It remains a hideous picture of treachery, intrigue, and dishonour, but there are two explanations on which it is proper to insist. One is that the legend of the obscenity of the book is absolutely baseless; the language is perfectly decent throughout. The other is the belief that *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is an incentive to

vice; the exact opposite is true—the novel is a satire, cynical and humiliating indeed, but unflinchingly severe, on the prevalent laxity of manners. Those who have asserted the contrary cannot have read it to the last bitter pages. Richardson was indulgent to Lovelace in the final duel; but Laclos hunts down Valmont and Madame de Merteuil with a savagery that scandalises even Mr. Aldington. Peccant beauty can deserve no worse chastisement than to languish after smallpox with a damaged complexion and the loss of one eye.

It is easy to disdain the novel of gallantry and sentiment which flourished in France through the middle of the eighteenth century, but as an episode in the development of literature it is absurd to ignore it. From Marivaux to Restif we have a body of fiction which cannot be said to insist upon attention, but to invite and to reward it. These novelists, especially the earlier ones, reduced the passion of love to a pastime, of which they undertook to teach the rules and chronicle the records. Love with Crébillon, and even with Marivaux, is a matter in which the head takes the place of the heart. No less dignified a contemporary than Buffon declared that "il n'y a pas de bon dans l'amour que de physique," and in the baser sort of novelists this was expanded with unbridled licence. But in the better writers it was draped in urbanity of manners, in the elegance of frivolity, in the subtlety of the art of conversation. The subject-matter of each successive novel was the

more and more searching anatomy of the female heart, and this reached its highest (and lowest) expression in the works of the younger Crébillon, to whom—at least to his most famous novel—Mr. Aldington is, I think, too indulgent.

Surely *Le Sopha* displays little "verve in satire," and is deformed by a good deal of baseness and dullness. There was merit in Crébillon, but it is not patent in his heavier writings, which are alembicated as well as corrupt. It is found in his dialogues, which are often singularly graceful. A contemporary, in the true language of the Regency, said that Crébillon spread the colours of the rainbow over a canvas of cobweb. This is partly true of such a story as *Le Hasard au Coin du Feu*, with its erotic aphorisms and universal frivolous scepticism. Laclos, coming much later, had evidently studied Crébillon and Marivaux, but there is little of the cobweb and the rainbow in his grim and hateful irony, while he had more command over the instrument of prose than Crébillon, whose language is often less skilful than his thought. Laclos could always say exactly what he wished, and exercised his privilege.

The social woman of the Regency liked to be thought modest, emotional, and simple. She was in reality extremely complicated, cynically shameless, and as cold as a stone to anything but sensual pleasure. Those elements were analysed by all the novelists, but most searchingly by Laclos. In consequence, he was banned by feminine readers because of his clairvoyance, while men were

equally disconcerted by his anatomy of their pretence to honour, passion, and fidelity. The ingenuity of the mode in which the inquiry is carried out is the best excuse for the somewhat perverse pleasure which we receive from the most graceful of these novels to-day. It is a purely intellectual enjoyment to follow the subtle and delicate counteraction of two caprices in these pagan stories. It is analogous to the satisfaction which the eye receives from a painting by Boucher or Fragonard. But in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* there is nothing of Fragonard, except the fine drawing of character. The dreaminess of Marivaux, the rose-colour and silver tissue which took the crudity away from incontinence in Crébillon, have vanished in Laclos. Rousseau has risen above the horizon, the Revolution is at hand, and it is time that " cette coquetterie minaudière " shall cease. But Laclos is still bound to the conventions of the age in which he was young, and he approaches his tragic theme in the lightest attire. He trips towards the guillotine as though dressed for a *fête champêtre.*

The reading of these novels of the alcove is not to be recommended to any persons who do not possess what the Plymouth Brother called " a strong spiritual digestion." But it is undeniable that such elect readers may find in the best of them a legitimate intellectual entertainment. Thirty years ago, when I was enjoying interminable discussions with Coventry Patmore, I ventured to lend him Crébillon's *Le Hasard au Coin du Feu.*

It was a rash act, but Patmore was at once a saint and a psychologist. He was also, more than any other man whom I have known, independent of all intellectual prejudice. He read the "libertine" dialogue with care, and he returned it to me with the remarkable judgement that it was capable of "a mystical and Catholic" interpretation, and had reminded him of some passages in St. John of the Cross. This criticism may sound odd, but it is at least not commonplace. It is useful as a reminder that all the appeals which these novels make to us to-day must be purely intellectual. They are mere bubbles of foam blown from the wave whence Venus rose, if we regard them otherwise than as exercises in emotional ingenuity. But the day of reckoning approaches, and even the *petits maîtres* grow serious; Choderlos de Laclos, though his cynicism seems at first to connive at corruption, becomes at last the most indignant of Timons.

The plot of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is very simple, and is economically conducted. Nothing is wasted on philosophical inquiries or on descriptions of scenery; in this respect the form of the book is a great improvement on that of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and goes back to Richardson, Laclos's real model. The personages are few and well defined. They are all members of high Parisian society under Louis XV., all wealthy, unoccupied, and witty. There is a sensitive young grass-widow, Mme. de Tourvel; and a young girl, Cécile de Volanges, who has just

returned home from the convent-school to her mother, Mme. de Volanges. There is a mild young gentleman, the Chevalier Danceny, who falls in love with Cécile ; and there is an aged lady, the Marquise de Rosemonde, at whose château in the country half of the action takes place.

All these people are virtuous, and their virtue is very sympathetically revealed, but there are two serpents in this paradise, two inconscionable miscreants, the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont, who are set on the ruin of everybody, and succeed to the full in all their desperate schemes of seduction. The hypocrisy and villainy of this precious pair have given *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* the bad name from which it suffers, but it should be acknowledged that complete retribution comes in the end. Madame de Tourvel dies of a broken heart in a convent, and little Cécile is ruined, but Danceny kills Valmont in a duel, and the Merteuil is shamed and disfigured.

It was early said, and has been constantly repeated since, that Choderlos de Laclos admired the impudence and Don Juanism of his hero, and in point of fact drew Valmont with complacency as a portrait of himself. Mr. Aldington exposes this myth with vigour, and proves its absurdity. He has devoted so much more research than I have to the life and writings of Choderlos de Laclos that I hesitate to make a suggestion which he will perhaps repudiate. Nevertheless, I submit to him, as the model for Valmont, a name which has

never, I think, been advanced. It is that of perhaps the most abandoned scoundrel in the history of literature, the novelist of *Angola*, the Chevalier de La Morlière. This man, who was twenty years Laclos's senior, was, like him, an officer serving in the garrison of Grenoble, a city which he filled with the ill-fame of his scandalous adventures. When Laclos was in Grenoble from 1769 to 1775, the escapades of the *mousquetaire de Sa Majesté* were still the talk of that town. La Morlière was the type of the ingenious and unscrupulous Don Juan, " plus connu par ses escroqueries et son impudence que par ses ouvrages," of which latter *Angola*, a would-be Eastern tale in the manner of Crébillon, is, however, still readable. A confession attributed to La Morlière gives a view of his character which, in the light of the facts, is almost flattering:

" Il ne faut point me demander comment, d'alcôve en alcôve, j'arrivai à cette dépravation qui était alors générale. Je recevais l'exemple de haut et j'acceptais comme un vernis ce qui était une gangrène."

But what Morlière and the other libertine novelists of the Regency accepted as a polished adornment become mere horror in the harsh satire of Laclos. He was himself no saint, but had not sunk, and never did sink, to infamy like his hero. Morlière notoriously did; and I suggest that he was probably the model for Valmont.

Those who have condemned *Les Liaisons Dan-*

gereuses as a didactically immoral book have not read it with patience and insight. If they had pushed on to Letter 86, they would have found the hypocrisy of Valmont nakedly exposed, while the infamy of Mme. de Merteuil early becomes too repulsive to be credible. Indeed, the weak point in the construction of the story is the necessity by which the arch-conspirators are forced to write to one another in terms the frankness of which is unnatural. It is absolutely incredible that a very clever woman of the world, anxious to preserve her position in society, should place herself in the power of a man like Valmont, of whose radical perfidy she was aware. She would *think* such malignant things, and perhaps *say* them, but never by any possibility *write* them. Possibly Choderlos de Laclos would have done better to choose a narrative form, but he was infatuated with the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Clarissa*. (Valmont has the assurance to compare himself with St. Preux!) The letters in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* are not so convincing as those in *Clarissa*; Richardson was the more sagacious master of the two. It is curious that the innocent correspondents—Cécile, Mme. de Tourvel, even Danceny—express themselves far more naturally than the wicked ones. This may surprisingly be laid to Laclos's credit, that he was more eloquent in the cause of virtue than in that of vice.

The question whether *Les Liaisons* is, or is not, a disgraceful publication remains unsettled. Mr. Aldington defends it with ingenuity and

learning in his excellent introduction, and says that " a timid and prudish criticism " has hitherto withheld from Laclos the enthusiasm he deserves. I confess that I cannot mount with Mr. Aldington to these heights of rapture. I recognise in Choderlos de Laclos a concentrated vigour of purpose and a remarkable skill in satirical suggestion. The way in which he turns inside out the excessive delicacy of his age is amusing. But I find him dry, harsh, violent, without imaginative horizon. As to the supposed immorality of his novel, that is hardly to be mentioned in the twentieth century, which has produced books far more indecent than any in the eighteenth. An age which has tolerated the brutality of *La Garçonne* and the foul chaos of *Ulysses* must not make itself ridiculous by throwing stones at *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

THE GALLANTRY OF FRANCE

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THE spirit displayed by the young French officers in this war deserves to be compared in many essential respects with that which is blazoned in the glorious " Chanson de Roland." It is interesting to remember that during the long years in which the direct influence of that greatest of mediæval epics was obscured, it was chiefly known through the paraphrase of it executed in German by the monk Konrad in the twelfth century. Many years ago, Gaston Paris pointed out the curious fact that Konrad completely modified the character of the " Chanson de Roland " by omitting all expressions of warlike devotion to " la douce France," and by concentrating the emotion of the poem on its religious sentiment. But the real theme of the " Chanson de Roland," as we know now, was the passionate attachment of the heroes to the soil of France ; " ils étaient poussés par l'amour de la patrie, de l'empereur français leur seigneur, de leur famille, et surtout de la gloire."

It is a remarkable instance of German " penetration " that in the paraphrase of the " Chanson de Roland " which Germany so long foisted upon Europe, these elements were successfully effaced. There was a sort of poetical revenge, therefore, in the attitude of those who answered the challenge of Germany in the true spirit of Roland and Oliver.

We have seen that Vauvenargues—to whose memory the mind incessantly reverts in contemplation of the heroes of this war—says in one of his " Maximes "—written nearly two centuries ago—" The earliest days of spring have less charm than the budding virtue of a young man." No figure of 1914 exemplifies this quality of grace more surprisingly than Jean Allard (who called himself in literature Méeus). He was only twenty-one and a half when he was killed at Pierrepont, at the very beginning of the war, but he was already one of the promising figures of his generation. Allard was looked upon as an incipient Admirable Crichton ; he was a brilliant scholar, an adroit and multiform athlete, the soul of wit and laughter, the centre of a group of adoring admirers. This sparkling poet was suddenly transformed by the declaration of war into the sternest of soldiers. His poem, called " Demain," created, or rather expressed, the patriotic passion which was simultaneously evoked all over France ; it is really a lesser " Marseillaise." Not less popular, but more elaborate and academic, is Allard's aviation poem, " Plus haut toujours ! " —an extraordinary vision of the flight and ecstasy and tragic death of a solitary airman. We may notice that in this, and many other verses describing recent inventions of science, the young French poets contrive to be very lucid and simple in their language, and to avoid that display of technical verbiage which deforms too many English experiments in the same class.

It is not, however, so much by his writings, which are now collected in two, or perhaps three, little volumes, that Allard-Méeus strikes the imagination of a foreign spectator, as by his remarkable attitude. From the first, this lad of twenty-one exemplified and taught the value of a chivalrous behaviour. In the face of events, in that corruption of all which could make the martial spirit seem noble, that Germany has forced upon the world, this attitude of young French officers at the very opening of the war is pathetic, and might even lend itself, if we were disposed for mirth, to an ironic smile. But it should be recorded and not forgotten. It was Allard who revived the etiquette of going to battle dressed as sprucely as for a wedding. We shall do well to recollect the symbolic value which the glove holds in legends of mediæval prowess. When the dying Roland, under the pine-trees, turns to the frontier of Spain, he offers, as a dying soldier, his glove to God—

Pur ses pecchiez deu puroffrid son guant.

Allard-Méeus at St. Cyr made all the young officers swear that they would not go into battle except in white gloves and with their *képi* adorned with the *casoar*, the red and white dress-plume. " Ce serment, bien français, est aussi élégant que téméraire," he said, and the rest followed him with acclamation. He was one of the first French officers to fall in battle, at the head of his infantry, and his mother was presented by the regiment

with his *casoar* and his gloves, worn at the moment of his death, on August 22, 1914, and stained with his blood. Allard offers a fugitive but typical specimen of the splendour of French sentiment in the first flush of its enthusiasm.

On March 26, 1917, the Société des Gens de Lettres in Paris held a solemn assembly under the presidency of M. Pierre Decourcelle to commemorate those authors who, during the present war, have fallen in the service of France. Touching and grave in the extreme was the scene, when, before a crowded and throbbing audience, the secretary read the name of one young writer after another, pausing for the president to respond by the words "Mort au champ d'honneur!" In each case there followed a brief silence more agitating in its emotion than any eloquence could be.

The great number of young men of high intellectual promise who were killed early in this war is a matter for grave and painful reflection. Especially in the first months of the autumn of 1914 the holocaust was terrible. There was no restraining the ardour of the young, who sought their death in a spirit of delirious chivalry, each proud to be the Iphigenia or the Jephtha's Daughter of a France set free. It has been noted since that the young generation, born about 1890, had been prepared for the crisis in a very significant way. The spiritual condition of these grave and magnificent lads resembled nothing that had been seen before, since the sorrows of 1870. They gave

the impression of being dedicated. As we now read their letters, their journals, their poems, we are astonished at the high level of moral sentiment which actuated them all. There is often even a species of rapturous detachment which seems to lift them into a higher sphere than that of vain mortality. Examples might be given by the sheaf, but it suffices here to quote a letter from the youthful Léo Lantil, who was killed early in 1915, in one of the obscure battles of Champagne. He says, in writing to his parents, shortly before his death, " All our sacrifice will be of sweet savour if it leads to a really glorious victory and brings more light to human souls." It was this Léo Lantil, dying in his twenty-fifth year, whose last words were " Priez pour la France, travaillez pour la France, haussez-la ! "

A story is told by M. Henri Bordeaux which illustrates the impression made by these young soldiers. A peasant of Savoy, while ploughing his fields in the autumn of 1914, saw his wife crossing to him with the local postman, who had a letter in his hands. He took it from them, and put on his spectacles, and read that his two sons had been killed in an engagement in the Vosges. He said quietly, " God has found them ready," and then, slowly, " My poor wife ! " and he returned to his yoke of oxen. It would seem that the French accepted, without reserve and without difficulty, an inward discipline for which the world had formed little conception of their readiness. There is no question now, since all the private letters

and diaries prove it, that the generation which had just left college, and had hardly yet gone out into the world, had formed, unsuspected by their elders, a conception of life which might have been called fatalistic if it had not been so rigorously regulated by a sense of duty. They were singularly calm under a constant presentiment of death. When the war came, they accepted the fiery trial not merely with resignation, but even with relief. Their athletic stoicism took what fortune offered them, instead of attempting to rebel against it. Their sentiment was that a difficulty had been settled. Life had been producing upon their consciences a sense of complication, a tangle of too many problems. Now they might, and did, cheerfully relinquish the effort to solve them. One of the most extraordinary features of the moral history of the young French officers in this war has been the abandonment of their will to the grace of God and the orders of the chief. In the letters of the three noble brothers Belmont, who fell in rapid succession, this apprenticeship to sacrifice is remarkable, but it recurs in all the records. " God found them ready ! "

When all is of so inspired an order of feeling, it is difficult, it is even invidious, to select. But the figure of Paul Lintier, whose journals have been piously collected by M. Edmond Haraucourt, stands out before us with at least as much saliency as any other. We may take him as a peculiarly lucent example of his illuminated class. Quartermaster Lintier died on March 15, 1916, struck by

a shell, on the Lorraine frontier, at a place called Jeandelincourt. He had not yet completed his twenty-third year, for he was born at Mayenne on May 13, 1893. In considering the cases of many of these brilliant and sympathetic young French officers, who had already published or have left behind them works in verse and prose, there may be a disposition, in the wonderful light of their experience, to exaggerate the positive value of their productions. Not all of them, of course, have contributed, or would have contributed, durable additions to the store of the literature of France. We see them, excusably, in the rose-light of their sunset. But, for this very reason, we are inclined to give the closer attention to Paul Lintier, who not only promised well but adequately fulfilled that promise. It seems hardly too much to say that the revelation of a prose-writer of the first class was brought to the world by the news of his death.

His early training predicted nothing of romance. He was intended for a career in commerce, but, showing no aptitude for trade, he dallied with legal studies at Lyons, and " commenced author " by publishing some essays in that city. At the age of twenty he joined a regiment of artillery, and seems to have perceived, a year before the war, that the only profession he was fitted for was soldiering. Towards the close of September 1914, in circumstances which he recounts in his book, he was severely wounded ; he went back to the front in July 1915, and, as we have said, fell fighting

eight months later. This is the history of a young man who will doubtless live in the annals of French literature ; and brief as it seems, it is really briefer still, since all we know of Paul Lintier, or are likely ever to know, is what he tells us himself in describing what he saw and practised and endured between August 1 and September 22, 1914. This wonderful book, *Ma Pièce*, was written by the young gunner, night after night, on his knee, during seven weeks of inconceivable intensity of emotion, and it is by this revelation of his genius that his memory will be preserved.

The style of Paul Lintier is one of the miracles of art. There is no evidence that this youth had studied much or had devoted himself to any of the training which adequate expression commonly demands. We know nothing about him until he suddenly bursts upon us, in the turmoil of mobilisation, as a finished author. What strikes a critical reader of *Ma Pièce*, as distinguishing it from other works of its class, is a certain intellectual firmness most remarkable in a lad of Lintier's age, suddenly confronted by such a frenzy of public action. There is no pessimism, and no rhetoric, and no touch of humour, but an obsession for the truth. This is displayed by another and an extremely popular recent publication, *En Campagne*, by M. Marcel Dupont, which exhibits exactly the same determination to exaggerate nothing and to reduce nothing, but to report exactly what the author saw with his own eyes, in that little corner of the prodigious battlefield in

which his own regiment was fighting. Truth, the simple unvarnished truth, has been the object of these various writers in setting down their impressions, but the result exemplifies the difference between what is, and what is not, durable as literature. For this purpose, it is well to turn from Lintier's pages to those of the honest writers of whom Dupont is the type, and then back again to Lintier. All evoke, through intense emotion, most moving and most tragic sensations, but Lintier, gifted with some inscrutable magic, evokes them in the atmosphere of beauty.

A quality of the mind of Paul Lintier which marked him out for a place above his fellows was the prodigious exactitude of his memory. This was not merely visual, but emotional as well. Not only did it retain, with the precision of a photograph, all the little fleeting details of the confused and hurried hours in which the war began, but it kept a minute record of the oscillation of feeling. Those readers who take a pleasure in the technical parts of writing may enjoy an analysis of certain pages in *Ma Pièce*, for instance, the wonderful description of an *alerte* at 2 A.M. above the village of Tailly-sur-Meuse (pp. 131, 132). With the vigorous picturesqueness of these sentences we may compare the pensive quality and the solidity of touch which combine to form such a passage as the following account of a watch at Azannes (August 14, 1914):

"La nuit est claire, rayée par les feux des projecteurs de Verdun qui font des barres d'or dans le

ciel ; merveilleuse nuit de mi-août, infiniment constellée, égayée d'étoiles filantes qui laissent après elles de longues phosphorescences.

" La lune s'est levée. Elle perce mal les feuillages denses des pruniers et le cantonnement immobile reste sombre. Çà et là, seulement, elle fait des taches jaunes sur l'herbe et sur les croupes des chevaux qui dorment debout. Le camarade avec qui je partage cette nuit de garde est étendu dans son manteau au pied d'un grand poirier. Devant moi, la lune illumine la plaine. Les prairies sont voilées de gaze blanche. Les deux armées, tous feux éteints, dorment ou se guettent."

Lintier has no disposition to make things out better than they were. His account of the defeat at Virton, on August 22, is grave and calm in its sad stoicism, it is even harsh in its refusal to overlook any of the distressing features of the affair. But hope rises in his heart like clear water in a troubled well, and it is just after this melancholy set-back that the noble French spirit most vividly asserts itself. In the very forefront of physical and moral misery, " quelle émouvante compréhension de la Patrie s'est révélée à nous ! " An army which is instantly and completely victorious can never experience the depth of this sentiment. It is necessary to have fought, to have suffered, to have feared (if only for a moment) that all was lost, in order to comprehend with passion what the mother-country means to a man. Lying in the fog, soaked with rain, at the edge of the copses from which the German guns had ejected them,

it was at that wretched moment that the full apprehension came to Paul Lintier that France comprised for him all the charm of life, all the affections, all the joys of the eyes and the heart and the brain. "Alors, on préfère tomber, mourir là, parce qu'on sent que la France perdue, ce serait pire que la mort." This is a feeling which animates the darkest pages of his book—and many of them perforce are gloomy; through all the confusion and doubt, the disquietude, the physical dejection, the sense of a kind of blind-man's buff intolerably wearisome and fatiguing—through all this, which the young author does not seek to conceal, there runs the ceaseless bright thread of hope sustained by love.

For us English the book has a curious interest in its unlikeness to anything which an English lad of twenty would have dreamed of writing. It strikes the English reader, in comparison with the equally gallant and hardly less picturesque records which some of our own young officers have produced, as extraordinarily "grown up." The new generation which France sent into the war of defence was more simple and more ardent at the outset than our own analogous generation was. It was less dilettante and more intellectual. The evidences of thought, of reasoned reflection carried out to its full extent, of an adequate realisation of the problems presented by life, are manifest, though in various degree, in all these records of French officers killed in the months which preceded Christmas 1914. These Frenchmen did not

go out light-heartedly, nor with a pathetic inability to fathom the purpose for which they so generously went, but they had given the matter a study which seemed beyond their years. They marched to the blood-baths of Belgium and Lorraine with solemnity, as though to a sacrament.

It must be remarked as an interesting point that this generation had recovered a sense of the spirituality of a war of national defence. In simpler words, it had recovered that honest pride which France, in certain of its manifestations since the war of 1870, seemed to have lamentably lost. Posterity will compare the serene simplicity of Péguy and Lintier with the restlessness and bitter disenchantment of the 1880 generation, which arrived at manhood just when France was most deeply conscious of her humiliation. If we seek for the sources of this recovery of self-respect, which so beautifully characterised French character at the immediate crisis of 1914, we have to find it, of course, in the essential elasticity of the trained French mind. The Frenchman likes the heroic attitude, which is unwelcome to us, and he adopts it instinctively, with none of our national shyness and false modesty. But, if we seek for a starting-point of influence, we may probably find it in the writings of a soldier whose name is scarcely known in England, but whose *Études sur le Combat*, first published in 1880, have been the text-book of the young French officer, and were never being so much read as just before the outbreak of the war.

The author of these *Études sur le Combat* was Colonel Ardent du Picq, who fell at the battle of Longeville-lès-Metz, on August 15, 1870. He had predicted the calamity of that war, which he attributed to the mental decadence of the French army, and to the absence of any adequate General Staff organisation. Ardent du Picq had received no encouragement from within or from without, and the reforms which he never ceased to advocate were treated as the dreams of an eccentric idealist. He died, unrecognised, without having lived to see carried out one of the reforms which he had so persistently advocated. His tongue was rough and his pen was dipped in acid; the military critic who ridiculed the "buffooneries" of his generals and charged his fellow-officers with trying to get through their day's work with as little trouble to themselves as possible, was not likely to carry much weight at the close of the Second Empire. But the scattered papers of the forgotten Colonel Ardent du Picq were preserved, and ten years after his death a portion of them was published. Every scrap which could be found of the work of so fruitful a military thinker was presently called for, and at the moment of the outbreak of the present war the *Études sur le Combat* had become the text-book of every punctilious young officer. It is still unknown how much of the magnificent effort of 1914 was not due to the shade of Ardent du Picq.

Although the name of that author does not occur in the pages of *Ma Pièce*, we are con-

strained to believe that Lintier had been, like so many young men of his class, an infatuated student of the *Études*. He had comprehended the essence of military vitality and the secret of military grandeur. He had perceived the paramount importance of moral force in contending with formidable hostile organisations. Ardent du Picq, who possessed the skill of his nation in the manufacture of maxims, laid it down that "Vaincre, c'est d'être sûr de la victoire." He assented to the statement that it was a spiritual and not a mechanical ascendancy which had gained battles in the past and must gain them in the future. Very interesting it is to note, in the delicately scrupulous record of the mind and conscience of Paul Lintier, how, side by side with this uplifted patriotic confidence, the weakness of the flesh makes itself felt. At Tailly, full of the hope of coming battle, waiting in the moonlit forest for the sound of approaching German guns, suddenly the heroism drops from him, and he murmurs the plaintive verses of the old poet Joachim du Bellay to the echo of " Et je mourrai peut-être demain ! " The delicate sureness with which he notes these changes of mood is admirable ; and quickly the depression passes : " vite notre extraordinaire insouciance l'emporte, et puis, jamais heure a-t-elle été plus favorable à la revanche ? "

In defining the particular principles which have actuated the magnificent French General Staff in the present crisis, Lord Haldane has dwelt on the fact that the French have displayed throughout

" that moral effect which comes from certainty of purpose and which only concentrated thought can give." The value which the higher authority sets on the cultivation of moral enthusiasm is exemplified by the fact that the French Ministry of War has encouraged the publication of those personal records, from which we have here made a selection, on the ground that they carry throughout the army a contagion of energy and courage. We are far here from the obscure jealousy of thought which made a military representative of the British War Office the other day lay down the brilliant axiom, " A hairdresser is of more value to the country at war than a librarian ! " Such a man could not exist in a French community, where, at the very height of hostilities, so prominent a military authority as Colonel Émile Manceau could pause to say, " Let us read, let us give much time to reading ! " It is a curious reflection that the present struggle has been, for the French, the most literary of all wars, the one in which the ordered expression of clear thought in language has been most carefully and consciously cultivated.

This was very far from being the case with the war of 1870, when the absence of literature was strongly felt during and after the crisis. The old satirist of the *Iambes*, Auguste Barbier, wrote, immediately after the declaration of peace, a poem in which he rehearsed the incidents of the war, and commented on the absence from the list of its victims of a single distinguished writer. He said :

" La Muse n'a pas vu tomber un seul poète,"

and it was out of anyone's power to refute the sinister and prosaic verse. The contrast with 1914 is painful and striking. In the existing war the holocaust of victims, poets and historians, painters and sculptors, musicians and architects, has been heartrending, and it can never in future years be pretended that the Muses have this time spared us their most poignant sacrifices. A year ago the *Revue Critique*, one of the most serious and original of the learned journals of Paris, announced the losses it had endured. It was conducted by a staff of forty scholars ; by the summer of 1916 this number was reduced by twenty-seven ; thirteen had been killed, eleven severely wounded, three had disappeared.

Many writers have asked, and M. Maurice Barrès prominently among them, what is the reason of the fact that intelligence has taken a front place in this war ? What has been the source of the spirit of self-immolation which has driven the intellectual and imaginative section of French youth to hold out both hands to catch the full downpour of the rain of death ? There is no precedent for it in French history, and we may observe for ourselves how new a thing it was, and how unexpected, by comparing with the ardent and radiant letters and poems of the youngest generation the most patriotic expressions of their elders. A single example may suffice. No man of letters has given a nobler witness to the truth of his patriotism than Colonel Patrice Mahon, known in letters as Art Roë. His novels, which dealt largely

with modern Russian life, in relation with the French army, were virile and elevated productions, but he was a man of fifty at the time of his heroic death at the head of his troops, in the battle of Wisembach (August 22, 1914), and his tone was not that of such young men as Camille Violand and Marcel Drouët. To read again the *Pingot et moi* of Art Roë is to return to a book of the utmost sincerity and valour, but it was published in 1893, and there is no touch of the splendour of 1914 about it.

A figure which stands midway between the generation of Art Roë and that of the adolescent comrades of a new Sophocles of whom we shall presently speak, is Captain E. J. Détanger, who seems to be transitional, and to share the qualities of both. This name has, even now, scarcely grown familiar to the eye and ear, but it proves to have been the real name of Émile Nolly, whose romances of modern life in the Extreme East had been widely read just before the war. Nolly's earliest books, *Hien le Maboul* and *La Barque Annamite* (but particularly the latter), gave promise of a new Pierre Loti or a new Rudyard Kipling, but totally distinct in manner from both. Détanger was just thirty-four when the war broke out, and he was one of its early victims, dying at Blainville-sur-l'Eau on September 5. He greatly distinguished himself by his personal bravery, and the cross of the Legion of Honour was pinned to his blood-stained uniform on his last battlefield. The tribute of a fellow-officer to this devoted man of letters may

be quoted here. It is an example of the sudden and complete transformation which turned artists into soldiers at the first sound of the bugle :

" Émile Nolly proved a magnificent soldier. He had a youthful, blithe, fervent, and resolute soul ; he had the soul of a hero completely prepared to sacrifice himself with joy for his country. After having served valiantly and brilliantly in Indo-China, and then in Morocco, it was with a radiant hope that he set out for the frontier of Lorraine. ' What does the life of any one of us matter ? ' he said to me just before he left. ' All that is essential is that France should live, that she should be victorious.' "

Marcel Drouët, who has just been mentioned, was much younger. He was a native of the invaded department of the Ardennes, and had not completed his twenty-sixth year when he was killed in the trenches of Consenvoye, in the Woëvre, when he was taking part in the outer defence of Verdun. He seems to have been distinguished by a refinement of spirit, which is referred to, in different terms, by everyone who has described him. He leaves behind him a volume of poems, *L'Ombre qui tourne*, and various essays and fragments. The journal of the last days of his life has been edited by M. Maurice Barrès, and is a record of singular delicacy and courage. We see him facing the dreadful circumstances of the war, made the more dreadful to him because the horrors are committed in the midst of the familiar scenes of his own home, and we find

him patiently waiting for the signal to lead his men into action while he holds a volume of Chateaubriand open upon his knee. The reflections of Marcel Drouët differ in some respects from those of his most enthusiastic companions. There is a note of tenderness in them which is unusual, and which is very pathetic. At the very close of his brief and heroic life, the thoughts of Drouët reverted to the historic town in which he was born, to Sedan which still shuddered in his infancy at the recollection of the horrors of 1870. He thought of the dead who fell on that melancholy field ; and then his thoughts turned to those dear faces which he had so recently left behind. The following passage, in its simplicity, in its sweetness, deserves to live in the memorial literature of the war :

" Je pense à vous, mes chers vivants, aux mains des barbares en ce moment sans doute, mais en le cœur de qui j'ai foi, tant je connais votre dévouement aux choses sublimes.

" Mais aussi je pense à vous, mon Dieu, qui avez voulu toutes ces choses pour votre plus grand gloire et pour l'établissement de votre justice. Tous ces malheurs, ces tristesses, tout ce sang répandu sont imposés par vous, mon Dieu, en manière de rédemption. Mais votre soleil glorieux éclairera bientôt, j'en suis absolument certain, la victoire du bon droit qui attend depuis près d'un demi-siècle. J'y co-opère de toutes mes forces, de toute mon âme. Et si vous me retirez de ce monde, ô Dieu de bonté, permettez que ce soit pour me joindre à ceux qui m'ont précédé dans votre séjour, et dont l'affection

terrestre me fut précieuse. C'est toute la prière ardente que je fais devant le soleil levant, ce jour de Toussaint que sillonnent déjà les obus semeurs de mort, en cette année 1914 qui verra rétablir la paix du monde, par l'anéantissement du peuple barbare, et la régénérescence de la nation française."

In most cases there rests an obscurity over the brief lives of these gallant young officer-authors, whose nature was little observed until the flash of battle illuminated them for one last brilliant moment. We feel a strong desire, which cannot be gratified, to follow them from their childhood to their adolescence, and to see for ourselves what impulses directed them into the path of heroism. It is rarely that we can do this, but one of these poets has left behind him two friends who have recaptured the faint and shrouded impressions of his early life. The piety of M. Henri Albert Besnard, who was his intimate companion, and of that practised narrator M. Henri Bordeaux, who is his biographer, enable us to form a clearer and fuller conception of Camille Violand than of any of his compeers. Born in 1891, he was typical of that latest generation of which we have spoken, in whom all seemed to be unconsciously preparing for the great and critical sacrifice. He was born at Lyons, but was brought up in the Quercy, that wild and tortured district just north of the Pyrenees, where nature seems to gather together all that she possesses of the grotesque and violent in landscape; but he was educated at Alençon, and trained at

Vouziers, in the midst of the orchards of Normandy. Thus both sides of France, the Midi and the Manche, were equally known to him, but the ceaseless peregrinations which he underwent, so far from enlarging his horizon, seem to have plunged his soul in melancholy. At the age of twenty he struck M. Bordeaux as being the typical *déraciné*.

The letters of Camille Violand and the memories of his friends present to us the record of a vague and uneasy boyhood. He began quite early to exercise his mind in prose and verse, but without energy or aim. He was not fixed in any plan of life. His letters—for he wrote with abundance, and something undefined seems to have induced his family to keep his letters—are steeped in sombre and objectless melancholy. He was tormented by presentiments of misfortune ; he indulged a kind of romantic valetudinarianism. In the confusion of his spirit as he passed uneasily from boyhood into manhood, the principal moral quality we perceive is a peevish irritation at the slow development of life. He was just twenty-one when the death of his mother, to whom he was passionately attached, woke him out of this paralysed condition, and it is remarkable that, in breaking, like a moth from a chrysalis, out of his network of futile and sterile sophisms, it was immediately on the contingency of war that he fixed his thoughts. The news of his mother's death, by a strange and rapid connection of ideas, reminded him of his future responsibility as an officer in the coming struggle.

He wrote, in 1913, " Je m'effraie en pensant à cette responsabilité qui pèsera certainement un jour sur moi, car je considère la guerre comme à peu près certaine à bref délai."

Having once formed this conviction, a complete revolution affected the character of the young Violand. His melancholy ceased ; his uncertainty fell from him ; it seemed as though his soul threw off her fetters. From the close of 1913, when the chancelleries of Europe were still profoundly unconscious of the tremendous upheaval which was in store for them, this young man, hitherto so timorous and irresolute, is seen to be filled with a species of prophetic ecstasy :

> The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness !
> The vaporous exultation not to be confined !
> . . . the animation of delight
> Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
> And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

This remarkable change of character was encouraged by the military discipline which now regulated his life, and which he accepted with rapture and devotion. His mother's one aim had been to make of Camille a soldier and a Christian, and he became the very type of that combination.

To use a striking phrase of M. Henri Bordeaux, the war found Camille Violand in a state of preparedness. He saw it arrive, not with anxiety or trepidation, but with solemn joy. His father was placed in command of a brigade of dragoons, and he himself, at another part of the frontier line, was given the rank of second lieutenant and a command

which filled him with the pride of responsibility. Three weeks later he was wounded in the head at the battle of Virton, but not until he had seen the Germans, after a hard fight, retire before the attack of his men. " Il a connu l'ivresse de la victoire : il a vu fuir l'ennemi "—so a friend announced it. He was taken back to the hospital at Limoges, but the victory of the Marne intoxicated him, and it was found impossible to hold him back. With a head still bandaged, he made his appearance once more in his beloved regiment, which was now fighting in the forest of the Argonne, but on the first occasion on which he led his men, Violand was wounded again, now in the shoulder. He was sent far back, into Brittany, to Quimper, where, a second time, by a subterfuge he contrived to escape from the hospital before his wound was properly healed. He was absolutely intractable in his determination to get back promptly to the fighting line : " il était comme ça, avec son air délicat et tranquille ! " Again brought back, he was set to training men at Quimper. But he could not endure the restraint, and his nerves broke down.

It was found impossible to hold him back, and on October 8 the military authorities consented to his return to his regiment, and with the permission was combined the news that he had been nominated for the cross of the Legion of Honour. The letter in which he announces that fact to the ladies at home—" mes chères Grand'mère et Tante "—is charming in its simplicity. " La

croix gagnée sur un champ de bataille, c'est à mes yeux le plus beau rêve qu'un jeune Français pût faire ; je regrette seulement de ne pas l'avoir méritée davantage ; mais l'avenir me permettra, j'espère, de justifier cette récompense, que je considère comme anticipée." The official notification specifies the wounds which he had received and the fact that, by the testimony of all who saw him under fire, the young lieutenant gave evidence of very great courage and of indomitable energy. That he was, by what he calls a queer coincidence, the youngest officer of his regiment and its only member of the Legion of Honour, afforded him an unaffected satisfaction.

From this time—the end of October 1914—the letters of Camille Violand testify to the rapid development of his mind and character. He loses a certain childishness which had hitherto clung to him, and he expresses himself with a more virile sobriety. Nothing could exceed the pathos of his pictures of the terrible life in the Argonne, and we are made to feel how rapidly the suffering and the responsibility of his military life were bringing out all the deepest and most serious elements in his character. There is a remarkable letter of January 7, 1915, describing an engagement in which he lost several of his best men, and in particular an experienced corporal in whose skill he much confided. The briefest fragment broken from this pathetic description, addressed to his father, will give a notion of the tone of it :

" J'étais absorbé par les blessés dans mon

poste de commandement et quand je pus me rendre dans la tranchée où il était, il tombait dans le coma. Ses derniers mots avaient été : ' Adieu, ma Patrie ! ' Pourtant, il me reconnut à la voix, me répondit faiblement. Je l'assistai dans ses derniers moments. Ce fut bien rapide, bien simple et bien beau. *J'étais pour lui le chef, ce qui est plus que le Père et le Prêtre réunis.* Je l'ai bien senti là ; quand ce fut presque fini, je l'embrassai et le quittai pour retourner aux soucis que nous donne l'ennemi."

Thus was this lad of three-and-twenty fortified and ripened by the arduous warfare in the Argonne. He was now spending what leisure the fighting gave him in a careful study of Homer. We gather that he had just finished re-reading the *Iliad* when the end came. On March 4, 1915, at Mesnil-lès-Hurlus, a ball pierced his heart, splintering in its passage the cross of the Legion of Honour of which he was so proud. In his pocket was found his last letter, still unposted, in which he told his father of a fresh distinction for valour which he had just received, and in the course of which, with a manifest presentiment of his approaching end, he wrote, " Je mourrai, si Dieu veut, en bon chrétien et en bon Français."

It is not to be denied that ordinary observers were not in any degree prepared for the heroic devotion displayed by such young officers as these at the beginning of the war. The general opinion in peace time was expressed by M. Maurice Maeterlinck when he laid it down that " courage,

moral and physical endurance (if not abnegation, forgetfulness of self, renunciation of all comfort, the faculty of sacrifice, the power to face death) belong exclusively to the most primitive, the least happy, the least intelligent of peoples, those which are least capable of reasoning, of taking danger into account." It was the common hypothesis among moralists that, as men's nerves grew more sensitive and the means of destruction more cruel and irresistible, no human being would be able to support the strain of actual fighting. It seemed inevitable that soldiers would rapidly become demoralised, when exposed to the multifarious horrors of modern mechanical battle. Nothing, therefore, could have been more surprising than the temper shown by thousands of young men, suddenly called up from sedentary and safe pursuits, and confronted by the terrors of shrapnel and liquid fire and mines and gas, and all the other horrible ingenuities of an unseen enemy for killing and mutilating. Their imaginations were unaccustomed to these terrors, it is true, but the higher faculties of the human mind asserted themselves, and in the vague collective battle of the trenches these young French officers, despite the refinement and the security in which they had always been accustomed to exist, instantly reverted to the chivalrous attitude which their remote ancestors had adopted in a warfare that was romantic and personal in its individualism.

No doubt a not inconsiderable part of the serenity, which is so remarkably evident in the

letters and journals of these young men, was due to the fact that they had arrived, for the first time, at a comprehension of the unity of life. There is no tedious alternative of choice in the active military career. All is regulated, all is arranged in accordance with a hierarchical discipline, and war becomes what dogmatic religion is to a weak soul that has been tossed about by the waves of doubt. It must be also borne in mind that the incessant dread of invasion, especially in the neighbourhood of the eastern frontier, had kept the spirits of those who knew that responsibility would fall upon them, in a state of unceasing agitation. It is a paralysing thing to exist under a perpetual menace which nothing can precipitate and yet nothing can avert. Captain Belmont, in his admirable letters, speaks much of the " romanticism " which attracted many of his companions, and of the natural satisfaction which the declaration of war gave to their restless faculties. The two sentiments were probably one and the same, and to a poetical temperament that might well seem " romantic " which filled a less vivid mind with restlessness and languor.

It is noticeable, too, that when once the sickening suspense was removed, and the path of pain and glory lay clear before these youthful spirits, they grew very rapidly in intellectual stature. They had found their equilibrium, and no more time and force were wasted in useless oscillations. Each of them had, at last, the occasion, and therefore the power, to fill out the lines of his proper

individuality. As M. Henri Bordeaux excellently says, " L'esprit inquiet ne se contente de rien, le cœur inapaisé se croit incompris." But now these men knew their vocation, and a precocious experience of life developed in them a temper of meditation. It is extraordinary what an intelligent philosophy, what a delicate study of nature, were revealed at once in the writings of these heroic boys of twenty. Lieutenant Belmont, who fought in Alsace, had spent his infancy and adolescence in the neighbourhood of Grenoble, and his memory was full of the rich Dauphiné valley, with its great river and its eastern horizon of the Alps. In the misery of the September nights of 1914, in the harshness of misty mornings among the Alsatian pines, his thoughts return to the luminous twilights of his old home under the great oaks of the Isère, and he expresses his nostalgia in terms of the most exquisite and the most unstudied grace. Here is a fragment of one of his letters home (October 1914):

" Les journées sont exquises, tristes et pâles, également différentes des crudités de nos idées et des ténèbres de l'hiver. L'imagination a vite fait de s'envoler, à travers cette lumière adoucie, vers tous les horizons familiers de la petite patrie, vers la vallée de Grenoble, paresseusement allongée dans ce bain de léger soleil, au pied des Alpes déjà engourdies, vers les terres rousses de Lonnes longées par les futaies jaunissantes où s'abritent les gibiers, tranquilles cette année."

No doubt, the reason why this war has been,

for France, so peculiarly a literary war, is that the mechanical life in the trenches, alternately so violent and so sedentary, has greatly enforced the habit of sustained contemplation based on a vivid and tragic experience. This has encouraged, and in many instances positively created, a craving for literary expression, which has found abundant opportunity for its exercise in letters, journals, and poems ; and what it has particularly developed is a form of literary art in which Frenchmen above all other races have always excelled, that analysis of feeling which has been defined as " le travail de ciselure morale." This moral carved-work, or chasing, as of a precious metal, revealing the rarity and value of spiritual surfaces, is characteristic of the journals of Paul Lintier, of the beauty of which we have already spoken. His art expends itself in the effect of outward things on the soul. He speaks of mysterious sights, half-witnessed in the gloaming, of sinister noises which have to be left unexplained. He does not shrink from a record of unlovely things, of those evil thoughts which attend upon the rancour of defeat, of the suspicion of treason which comes to dejected armies like a breath of poison-gas. That portion of his " Souvenirs " which deals with the days of the retreat on Paris is written in a spasm of savage anger ; a whole new temper is instantly revealed when once the tide turns at Nanteuil. Nature herself thus endorses his new mood, as he writes " There are still clouds heaped up to the west, but the blue, that cheers us, is chasing them all away."

Among the noble young poets whose pathetic and admirable fragments the piety of surviving friends has preserved, it is difficult to select one name rather than another. But in the rank of these Rupert Brookes and Julian Grenfells and Charles Listers of France, we may perhaps pause before the ardent figure of Jacques de Choudens. He was a Breton, and was trained for the law on the other side of France, at Lille. He found that the call of the sea was irresistible, and after two years at a desk in that dreary and dusty city, he suddenly flung up his cap and would have no more of such drudgery. To the despair of his family, he started on the high seas, and explored the wonderland of Haiti. After various adventures, he was about to return to France, when the sea again took him by the throat, and he vanished, like Robert Louis Stevenson, in the Pacific. Having sailed twice round the world, " beyond the sunset and the baths of all the western stars," a tired Ulysses under thirty, Jacques de Choudens had just come back to France when the war seized him with a fresh and deep enchantment. He entered into it with a profound ardour, and proved himself to possess exceptional military qualities. He was severely wounded on the second day of the battle of Charleroi, but slowly recovered, only to be killed in an engagement on June 13, 1915. His poems, written since war broke out, have been carefully collected and published by his friend, M. Charles Torquet. They are few, and they suffer from a certain hardness of touch ; Jacques de Choudens

had, as yet, a deeper acquaintance with life than with literature ; but they breathe a spirit of high and romantic heroism. Let the sonnet called " Autre Prière " be offered as an example :

Terres, fleuves, forêts, ô puissances occultes,
C'est votre âme qui bat au bleu de nos poignets ;
Notre orgueil s'est enfin cabré sous les insultes
Dont, depuis quarante ans, ô France, tu saignais.

Dans le livre où s'apprend le plus hautain des cultes,
Marque la page avec nos sabres pour signets ;
Ceins la couronne d'or qu'en l'An deux tu ceignais,
Car c'est dans notre chair à nous que tu la sculptes.

France ! France ! Bénis chaque arme et chaque front ;
C'est d'ardeur, non de peur, que tremble l'éperon.
Nous sommes tes martyrs volontaires, superbes,

Sous l'auréole d'or des galons du képi. . . .
Nous allons préparer aux faucilles des gerbes,
Puisqu'où tombe un soldat pousse un nouvel épi.

The poet, shortly before he fell, wrote to a friend " Nous travaillerons mieux après la victoire, ce que nous ferons ayant été mûri par la fatigue et les angoisses. La vie est bonne et belle et la guerre est une chose bien amusante." This is the type of Frenchman who fights for the love of fighting, who puts above all other happiness the prize of military honour and glory won in a good cause. We meet with it in the lyrical effusion of an adventurous poet like Jacques de Choudens and in the straightforward evidence of a practised soldier like Captain Hassler, whose " Ma Campagne " is a record extraordinary alike for its courage, for its vivacity, and for its modesty.

The peculiar spirit of ardent gallantry to which we have dedicated these few pages is illustrated, as will be observed, by examples taken without exception from the first months of the war. It would be rash to say, without a careful sifting of evidence, how much of this sentiment survived the days which preceded the battle of the Marne. France has, in the succession of her attacks up to the present hour, continued and confirmed the magnificent tradition of her courage. But it is impossible to overlook the elements which have taken the romantic colour out of the struggle. No chivalry could survive close experience of the vile and bestial cruelty of German methods. The sad and squalid aspects of a war of resistance, fought in the very bleeding flesh of the beloved mother-country, were bound to be fatal to " cette bonne humeur bienfaisante " which so marvellously characterised the young French officers of August 1914. Moreover, the mere physical element of fatigue has been enough to quench that first radiant flame. We find it deadening, at last, even the high spirit of Paul Lintier, and we listen to his confession : " To sleep ! to sleep ! O to live without a thought, in absolute silence. To live, after having so often nearly died. I could sleep for days, and days, and days ! "

These are considerations which belong to a heavier and a wearier time. As a matter of history—so that in our hurrying times a gesture of so much beauty may not, because it was so ephemeral, be forgotten—I have endeavoured to

catch a reflection of the glow which blazed in the hearts of young intellectual officers at the very beginning of the war. If in the inevitable wear and tear of the interminable struggle, this beauty fades into the light of common day, so much the more is there need that we should fix it in memory, since in a world which savagery and treason have made so hideous, we cannot afford to let this jewel of pure moral beauty be trampled into oblivion.

1917.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BRONTËS

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BRONTËS[1]

ALTHOUGH I possess in no degree the advantage which so many of the members of your society enjoy in being personally connected with the scenes and even, perhaps, with the characters associated with the Brontë family, I cannot begin my little address to you to-day without some invocation of the genius of the place. We meet at Dewsbury because the immortal sisters were identified with Dewsbury. Is it then not imperative that for whatever picture of them I may endeavour to present before you this afternoon, Dewsbury should form the background? Unfortunately, however, although in the hands of a skilful painter the figures of the ladies may glow forth, I fear that in the matter of taking Dewsbury as the background some vagueness and some darkness are inevitable. In the biographies of Mrs. Gaskell and of Mr. Clement Shorter, as well as in the proceedings of your society, I have searched for evidences of the place Dewsbury took in the lives of the Brontës. What I find—I expect you to tell me that it is not exhaustive—is this. Their father, the Rev. Patrick Brontë, was curate here from 1809

[1] Address delivered before the Brontë Society in the Town Hall of Dewsbury, March 28, 1903.

to 1811. In 1836, when Charlotte was twenty, Miss Wooler transferred her school from Roe Head to Heald's House at the top of Dewsbury Moor. In this school, where Charlotte had been a pupil since 1831, she was now a governess, and a governess she remained until early in 1838. In April of that year Miss Wooler was taken ill and Charlotte was for a little while in charge. Then there was an explosion of temper, of some kind, and Charlotte went back to Haworth.

That, then, in the main, is the limit of what the scrupulous Muse of history vouchsafes to tell us about Charlotte Brontë's relation to Dewsbury. But it also supplies us with one or two phrases which I cannot bring myself to spare you. In January 1838, Charlotte reviews her experience at Dewsbury Moor ; " I feel," she says, " in nothing better, nothing humbler nor purer." Again, in 1841, after there had passed time enough to mellow her exacerbations, she continues to express herself with vigour. Miss Wooler is making overtures to Charlotte and Emily to take over the school at Heald's House ; perhaps a place might be found for Anne as well. Miss Wooler, one of the kindest of women, is most thoughtful, most conciliatory. Charlotte will have none of the idea ; she puts it roughly from her. Of Dewsbury she has nothing to say but that " it is a poisoned place for me." This is all we know of Charlotte's relation to Dewsbury, yet nothing, you will tell me, in Froude's phrase, to what the angels know. Well, I must be frank with you and say that I am afraid

the angels have been inclined to record exceedingly little of Charlotte Brontë's residence in your inoffensive neighbourhood. I have to paint a background to my picture, and I find none but the gloomiest colours. They have to be what the art-critics of the eighteenth century called "sub-fusc." But it is not the fault of Dewsbury, it is the fault, or the misfortune, of our remarkable little genius. She was here, in this wholesome and hospitable vicinity, for several months, during which time "she felt in nothing better, neither humbler nor purer," and looking back upon it, she had to admit that it was "a poisoned place" to her.

I cannot help fancying that you will agree with me, that on such an occasion as the present, and especially when dealing with a group of writers about whom so much has been said as about the Brontës, it is wise not to cover too wide a ground, but to take, and keep to, one aspect of the subject. Our little excursion into the history seems to have given us, under the heading "Dewsbury," a rather grim text, from which, nevertheless, we may perhaps extract some final consolation. Let me say at the outset that for the grimness, for the harshness, Dewsbury is not at all to blame. I fancy that if, in the years from 1836 to 1838, the Brontë girls had been visitors to Kubla Khan, and had been fed on honey by his myrmidons at Xanadu, that pleasure-dome would yet have been "poisoned" to them. It was not poverty, and cold, and the disagreeable position of a governess,

it was not the rough landscape of your moors, nor its lack of southern amenity which made Charlotte wretched here. It was not in good Miss Wooler, nor in the pupils, nor in the visitors at Heald's House that the mischief lay, it was in the closed and patient crater of Charlotte's own bosom. And I am almost persuaded that, if you had lived in Dewsbury sixty-five years ago, you would have heard on very quiet days a faint subterranean sound which you would never have been able to guess was really the passion, furiously panting, shut up in the heart of a small, pale governess in Heald's House schoolroom.

If you accuse me of fatalism, I am helpless in your hands, for I confess I do not see how it could be otherwise, and do scarcely wish that it could have been. Let us not be too sentimental in this matter. Figures in literature are notable and valuable to us for what they give us. The more personal and intense and definite that is, the greater the gift, the more strenuous the toil and the more severe the initiation which lead to its expression. The Brontës had a certain thing to learn to give ; what that was we shall presently try to note. But whatever we find it to be, we start with allowing that it was extremely and boldly original. It was not to be mastered by lying upon padded sofas and toying with a little Berlin wool-work. It involved pain, resistance, a stern revision of things hitherto taken for granted. The secrets which they designed to wring from nature and from life were not likely to be revealed to the self-indulgent

and the dilettante. The sisters had a message from the sphere of indignation and revolt. In order that they should learn it as well as teach it, it was necessary that they should arrive on the scene at an evil hour for their own happiness. *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* and *Villette* could not have been written unless, for long years, the world had been a " poisoned place " for Charlotte Brontë.

It has been excellently said by Mrs. Humphry Ward that in many respects, and to the very last, the Brontës challenge no less than they attract us. This is an aspect which, in the midst of rapturous modern heroine-worship, we are apt to forget. Thackeray, who respected the genius of the family, and was immensely kind to the author of *Jane Eyre*, never really felt comfortable in her company. We know how he stole out of his own front-door, and slipped away into the night to escape her. " A very austere little person," he called her, and we may put what emphasis on the austerity we will. I feel sure that any maladroit " white-washing of Charlotte " will tend, sooner or later, good-natured though it may be, in a failure to comprehend what she really was, in what her merit consisted, what the element in her was that, for instance, calls us here together nearly half a century after she completed her work and passed away. Young persons of genius very commonly write depressing books ; since, the more vivid an unripe creature's impression of life is, the more acute is its distress. It is only extremely stupid Sunday-school children who shout in chorus, " We

are so happy, happy, happy!" Genius thrown naked, with exposed nerves, on a hard indifferent world, is never "happy" at first. Earth is a "poisoned place" to it, until it has won its way and woven its garments and discovered its food.

But in the case of Charlotte Brontë, unhappiness was more than juvenile fretfulness. All her career was a revolt against conventionality, against isolation, against irresistible natural forces, such as climate and ill-health and physical insignificance. Would this insubmissive spirit have passed out of her writings, as it passed, for instance, out of those of George Sand? I am not sure, for we see it as strongly, though more gracefully and skilfully expressed, in *Villette* as in the early letters which her biographers have printed. Her hatred of what was commonplace and narrow and obvious flung her against a wall of prejudice, which she could not break down. She could only point to it by her exhausting efforts; she could only invite the generation which succeeded her to bring their pickaxes to bear upon it. Hence, to the very last, she seems, more than any other figure in our literature, to be for ever ruffled in temper, for ever angry and wounded and indignant, rejecting consolation, crouched like a sick animal in the cavern of her own quenchless pride. This is not an amiable attitude, nor is it historically true that this was Charlotte Brontë's constant aspect. But I will venture to say that her amiabilities, her yielding moods, are really the unessential parts of her disposition, and that a certain admirable

ferocity is the notable feature of her intellectual character.

Her great heart was always bleeding. Here at Dewsbury, in the years we are contemplating, the hæmorrhage was of the most doleful kind, for it was concealed, suppressed, it was an inward flow. When once she became an author the pain of her soul was relieved. She said, in 1850, looking back on the publication of the hapless first volume of poems, "The mere effort to succeed gave a wonderful zest to existence." Then, a little later, when no one had paid the slightest attention to the slender trio of maiden voices, "Something like the chill of despair began to invade their hearts." With a less powerful inspiration, they must have ceased to make the effort; they must have succumbed in a melancholy oblivion. But they were saved by the instinct of a mission. It was not their private grief which primarily stirred them. What urged them on was the dim consciousness that they gave voice to a dumb sense of the suffering of all the world. They had to go on working; they had to pursue their course, though it might seem sinister or fatal; their business was to move mankind, not to indulge or please it. They "must be honest; they must not varnish, soften, or conceal."

What Charlotte Brontë was learning to do in her grim and, let us admit it, her unlovely probation on Dewsbury Moor, was to introduce a fresh aspect of the relations of literature to life. Every great writer has a new note; hers was—

defiance. All the aspects in which life presented itself to her were distressing, not so much in themselves as in herself. She rebelled against the outrages of poverty, and she drank to its dregs the cup of straitened circumstances. She was proud, as proud as Lucifer, and she was forced into positions which suppleness and cheerfulness might have made tolerable, if not agreeable. She wrung from these positions their last drop of bitterness. A very remarkable instance of this may be found in her relation to the Sidgwick family, who, by universal report, were generous, genial, and unassuming. To Charlotte Brontë these kindly, if somewhat commonplace folk, grew to seem what a Turkish pasha seems to the inhabitants of a Macedonian village. It was not merely the surroundings of her life—it was life itself, in its general mundane arrangements, which was intolerable to her. She fretted in it, she beat her wings against its bars, and she would have done the same if those bars had been of gold, and if the fruits of paradise had been pushed to her between them. This, I think, is why the expression of her anger seems too often disproportionate, and why her irony is so apt to be preposterous. She was born to resist being caged in any form. Her defiance was universal, and often it was almost indiscriminate.

Do not let us presume to blame this insubmission. Still less let us commit the folly of minimising it. A good cheerful little Charlotte Brontë, who thought the best of everybody, who

gaily took her place without a grudging sigh, whose first aim was to make those about her happy and to minister to their illusions, would have been a much more welcome inmate of Miss Wooler's household than the cantankerous governess whom nobody could please, whose susceptibilities were always on edge, whose lonely arrogance made her feared by all but one or two who timidly persisted in loving her. But such a paragon of the obvious virtues would have passed as the birds pass and as the flowers. She would have left no mark behind. She would never have enriched the literature of England by one of its master-evidences of the force of human will. She would never have stirred hundreds of thousands of consciences to a wholesome questioning of fate and their own souls.

Let us endeavour to pursue the inquiry a few steps further. It is impossible to separate the ethical conditions of an author's mind from the work that he produces. The flower requires the soil; it betrays in its colour and its perfume the environment of its root. The moral constitution of the writer is reflected in the influence of the written page. This is the incessant contention; on one hand the independence of art asserts itself; on the other, it is impossible to escape from the implicit influence of conduct upon art. There have been few writers of any age in whom this battle raged more fiercely than it did in Charlotte Brontë. Her books, and those of her sisters, seem anodyne enough to-day; to readers of a sensitive species they seemed, when they were published, as

dangerous as *Werther* had been, as seductive as the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. The reason of this was, in the main, the spirit of revolt which inspired them. There was something harsh and glaring in their landscape ; there was that touch of Salvator Rosa which one of their earliest critics observed in them. But more essential was the stubbornness, the unflinching determination to revise all accepted formulas of conduct, to do this or that, not because it was usual to do it, but because it was rational, and in harmony with human nature.

Into an age which had become almost exclusively utilitarian, and in which the exercise of the imagination, in its real forms, was sedulously discountenanced, Charlotte Brontë introduced passion in the sphere of prose fiction, as Byron had introduced it in the sphere of verse thirty years earlier. It was an inestimable gift ; it had to come to us, from Charlotte Brontë or another, to save our literature from a decline into triviality and pretension. But she suffered, as Byron had suffered, in the direct ratio of her originality. If a writer employs passion in an age which has ceased to recognise it as one of the necessities of literary vitality he is safe to be accused of perverting his readers. Balzac says, " When nothing else can be charged against an author, the reproach of immorality is thrown at his head." When we study the record of the grim life of the sisters at Haworth, like that of three young soldiers round a camp-fire with the unseen enemy prowling in the darkness just out of their sight—when we

think of the strenuous vigil, the intractable and indomitable persistence, the splendour of the artistic result—we may console ourselves in our anger at the insults they endured, by reflecting how little they cared. And their noble indifference to opinion further endears them to us. We may repeat of them all what Charlotte in a letter once said of Emily, " A certain harshness in her powerful and peculiar character only makes me cling to her more."

This insubmissiveness, which was the unconscious armour given to protect her against the inevitable attacks of fortune, while, on the one hand, it was the very sign-manual of Charlotte's genius, was, on the other, a drawback from which she did not live long enough to emancipate her nature. It is responsible for her lack of interest in what is delicate and complex ; it excused to herself a narrowness of vision which we are sometimes tempted to find quite distressing. It is probably the cause of a fault that never quits her for long, a tendency to make her characters express themselves with a lyrical extravagance which sometimes comes close to the confines of rodomontade. Charlotte Brontë never arrives at that mastery of her material which permits the writer to stand apart from his work, and sway the reader with successive tides of emotion while remaining perfectly calm himself. Nor is she one of those whose visible emotion is nevertheless fugitive, like an odour, and evaporates, leaving behind it works of art which betray no personal agitation. On the contrary,

her revolt, her passion, all the violence of her sensibility, are present on her written page, and we cannot read it with serenity or with a merely captious curiosity, because her own eager spirit, immortal in its active force, seems to throb beside it.

The aspect of Charlotte Brontë which I have tried to indicate to you to-day, and which I have sketched thus hastily and slightly against the background of her almost voiceless residence in Dewsbury, is far from being a complete or unique one. I offer it to you only as a single facet of her wonderful temperament, of the rich spectacle of her talent. I have ventured to propose it, because, in the multiplication of honours and attentions, the tendency to deify the human, to remove those phenomena of irregularity which are the evidence of mortal strength, grows irresistible, and we find ourselves, unconsciously, substituting a waxen bust, with azure eyes and golden hair, for the homely features which (if we could but admit it) so infinitely better match the honest stories. Let us not busy ourselves to make excuse for our austere little genius of the moors. Let us be content to take her exactly as she was, with her rebellion and her narrowness, her angers and her urgencies, perceiving that she had to be this sorrowful offspring of a poisoned world in order to clear the wells of feeling for others, and to win from emancipated generations of free souls the gratitude which is due to a precursor.

THE MATCHLESS ORINDA

THE MATCHLESS ORINDA

It was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that women began to be considered competent to undertake literature as a profession. In the crowded galaxy of Elizabethan and Jacobean poets there is no female star even of the seventh magnitude. But with the Restoration, the wives and daughters, who had learned during the years of exile to act in political and diplomatic intrigue with independence and skill, took upon themselves to write independently too, and the last forty years of the century are crowded with the names of "celebrated scribbling women." Among all these the Matchless Orinda takes the foremost place—not exactly by merit, for Aphra Behn surpassed her in genius, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, in versatility, and Catherine Trotter in professional zeal; but by the moral eminence which she attained through her elevated public career, and which she sealed by her tragical death. When the seventeenth century thought of a poetess, it naturally thought of Orinda; her figure overtopped those of her literary sisters; she was more dignified, more regal in her attitude to the public, than they were; and, in fine, she presents us with the best type we possess of the woman of letters in the seventeenth century.

Yet modern criticism has entirely neglected

her. I cannot find that any writer of authority has mentioned her name with interest since Keats, in 1817, when he was writing *Endymion*, came across her poems at Oxford, and in writing to Reynolds remarked that he found "a most delicate fancy of the Fletcher kind" in her poems, and quoted one piece of ten stanzas to prove it. In Mr. Ward's *English Poets*, where so many names owe their introduction to one or two happy compositions which have survived the body of their works, I find no page dedicated to Orinda; and I suppose she may fairly be considered as dead to the British public. If I venture to revive her here, it is not that I greatly admire her verses, or consider her in the true sense to have been a poet, for even the praise just quoted from Keats seems to me exaggerated; but it is because of the personal charm of her character, the interest of her career, and its importance as a chapter in the literary history of the Restoration. Nor was she, like so many of her contemporaries, an absurd, or preposterous, or unclean writer; her muse was uniformly pure and reasonable; her influence, which was very great, was exercised wholly in favour of what was beautiful and good; and if she failed, it is rather by the same accident by which so many poets of less intelligence have unexpectedly succeeded.

Katherine Fowler was born on New Year's Day, 1631, in a respectable cockney family of Bucklersbury. Of her father, who was a Presbyterian, nothing else is known save that he was a prosper-

ous merchant. She was baptized at the font of St. Mary Woolchurch on January 11, 1631. John Aubrey, the antiquary, who was her exact contemporary and one of her numerous friends, has preserved various traditions of her childhood. Like Cowley, another cockney child of the period, she was very eager and precocious in the pursuit of letters. The imaginative bias of her mind first took a religious form. She had read the Bible right through before she was five years old; she would pray aloud—rather ostentatiously, one fears—by the hour together, and had a potent memory for the actual text of the florid sermons that she heard on Sundays. At school she was a prodigy of application; she would commonly say, by heart, many chapters and passages of Scripture, and began at a very early age to write verses. As she grew old enough to form convictions of her own, she threw off the Presbyterian and Parliamentary traditions of her home, and announced herself an admirer of the Church and the King just as those stars were setting on the political horizon. Through the darkest period of the Commonwealth she remained stanchly Royalist; and we may fancy that she was well content to leave a home no longer sympathetic to her, when, in her seventeenth year, she married a Royalist gentleman of Wales, Mr. James Philips, of Cardigan Priory.

The early part of her life as Mrs. Philips is dark to us. None of her letters, and but few of her poems, from this period have been preserved.

The earliest of her verses form an address to her neighbour Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, on the publication of his *Olor Iscanus* in 1651. These lines are interesting to the student of versification as showing that Katherine Philips, from the very first, had made up her mind to look forwards and not backwards. There is no particular merit in these verses, but they belong to the school of Waller and Denham, and prove that the authoress had learned very exactly the meaning of the new prosody. To the end of her career she never swerved from this path, to which her constant study of French poetry further encouraged her.

She seems to have adopted the melodious pseudonym by which she had become known to posterity in 1651. It would appear that among her friends and associates in and near Cardigan she instituted a Society of Friendship, to which male and female members were admitted, and in which poetry, religion, and the human heart were to form the subjects of discussion. This society, chiefly, no doubt, owing to the activity of Mrs. Philips, became widely known, and was an object of interest to contemporaries. Jeremy Taylor recognised it from afar, and Cowley paid it elaborate compliments. In the eyes of Orinda it took an exaggerated importance :

> Nations will own us now to be
> A temple of divinity ;
> And pilgrims shall ten ages hence
> Approach our tombs with reverence,

a prophecy which still waits to be fulfilled. On December 28, 1651, Miss Anne Owen, a young lady of Landshipping, entered the Society under the name of Lucasia, it being absolutely necessary that each member should be known by a fancy name. The husband of the poetess, for instance, is never mentioned in her poems or her correspondence except as Antenor. Lucasia was the chief ornament of the Society, and the affection of Orinda was laid at her feet for nearly thirteen years, in a style of the most unbounded and vivacious eulogy. It is very delightful to contemplate the little fat, ruddy, cockney lady, full of business and animation, now bustling the whole parish by the ears, now rousing her rather sluggish husband to ambition, now languishing in platonic sentiment at the feet of the young Welsh beauty who accepted all her raptures so calmly and smilingly. In Miss Owen, Mrs. Philips saw all that can be seen in the rarest altitudes of human character:

> Nor can morality itself reclaim
> The apostate world like my Lucasia's name:
> . . . Lucasia, whose harmonious state
> The Spheres and Muses only imitate.
> . . . So to acknowledge such vast eminence,
> Imperfect wonder is our eloquence,
> No pen Lucasia's glories can relate.

Nor is Lucasia the only member of her little provincial quorum of whom she predicates such brave things. There is Ardelia, whose real name neglectful posterity has forgotten to preserve;

there is Miss Mary Aubrey, who becomes Mrs. Montague as time goes on, and whose poetical name is Rosania; there is Regina, "that Queen of Inconstancy," Mrs. John Collier; later on, Lady Anne Boyle begins to figure as "adored Valeria," and Lady Mary Cavendish as "dazzling Polycrite." The gentlemen have very appropriate names also, though propriety prevents Orinda, in their cases, from celebrating friendship in terms of so florid an eloquence. The "excellent Palæmon" was Francis Finch originally, but the name was transferred, as the "noble Palæmon," to Jeremy Taylor; the "noble Silvander," Sir Edward Dering, was more fortunate in preserving his name of honour; and last, but not least, the elegant Sir Charles Cotterel achieved a sort of immortality as Orinda's greatest friend, under the name of Poliarchus.

There are few collections of seventeenth-century verse so personal as the poems of Orinda. Her aspirations and sentimentalities, her perplexities and quarrels, her little journeys and her business troubles, all are reflected in her verse as a mirror. She goes from Tenby to Bristol by sea in September 1652, and she gives Lucasia an account of the uneventful voyage in verse:

> But what most pleased my mind upon the way,
> Was the ships' posture that in harbour lay;
> Which to a rocky grove so close were fixed
> That the trees' branches with the tackling mixed,—
> One would have thought it was, as then it stood,
> A growing navy or a floating wood.

These are verses for which we have lost all taste, but they were quite as good as those by which Waller was then making himself famous, and in the same modern manner. These and others were handed about from one friend to another till they reached London, and gained the enthusiastic poetess literary and artistic friends. Among these latter were Henry Lawes, the great musician, and Samuel Cooper, the finest miniature painter of the day, to both of whom she has inscribed flowing copies of verses, informed by her familiar stately wit.

But the subject that chiefly inspired her was the excellence of her female friends, and in treating this theme she really invented a new species of literature. She is the first sentimental writer in the English language, and she possesses to the full those qualities which came into fashion a century and a half later in the person of such authors as Letitia Landon. Orinda communes with the stars and the mountains, and is deeply exercised about her own soul. She is all smiles, tears, and sensibility. She asks herself if her affection has been slighted, she swears eternal troth, she yearns for confidences, she fancies that she is " dying for a little love." With Antenor, her husband, she keeps up all the time a prosaic, humdrum happiness, looking after his affairs, anxious about his health, rather patronisingly affectionate and wifely ; but her poetical heart is elsewhere, and her leisure moments are given up to romantic vows with Rosania and Lucasia, and correspondence about

the human heart with the noble Silvander. The whole society, one cannot help feeling, was entirely created and kept alive by the sensibility of Orinda, and nothing but her unremitting efforts could have sustained its component parts at the proper heights of sympathy. Mrs. Philips, in fact, had come to the conclusion that, as she put it, " Men exclude women from friendship's vast capacity," and she was determined, in spite of the difficulties in her path, to produce some shining specimens of female friendship. The seventeenth century was quite astonished, and looked on with respectful admiration, while the good Orinda laboured away, undeterred by the irritating circumstances that her *sociétaires* would get married at the very moment when they seemed approaching perfection, and that after marriage they were much more difficult for her to manage than before.

Her first great disappointment was the " apostasy " of Rosania, on which occasion she lifted up her voice to the " great soul of Friendship," and was rewarded by unusual response from Lucasia, on whom it is possible that the absence of Rosania had acted in an exhilarating manner. But it is time to quote some of those addresses to her friends by which she distinguishes herself so clearly from all the writers of her generation, and by which she must be known in future, if she be known at all. After receiving one of those compliments from the great men of her age, which began to flow in upon her retirement at Cardigan, Orinda

thus expressed her satisfaction to Lucasia, and stirred her up to fresh efforts of sentiment :

Come, my Lucasia, since we see
That miracles man's faith do move,
By wonder and by prodigy
To the dull angry world let's prove
There's a religion in our love.

We court our own captivity,—
Than thrones more great and innocent ;
'Twere banishment to be set free,
Since we wear fetters whose intent
Not bondage is, but ornament.

Divided joys are tedious found,
And griefs united easier flow ;
We are ourselves but by rebound,
And all our titles shuffled so,—
Both princes, and both subjects too.

Our hearts are mutual victims laid,
While they,—such power in friendship lies,—
Are altars, priests and offerings made,
And each heart which thus kindly dies,
Grows deathless by the sacrifice.

It cannot be denied that these are vigorous lines, full of ingenious fancy, nor were there many men then living in England who could surpass them. We are dealing with a school whose talent has evaporated, and we must not forget to judge such verse by the standards of its time. Of Milton nobody was thinking ; Dryden was still silent ; Herrick and Wither had ceased to write ; and it may safely be said that there was nothing in the lines just quoted which Cowley, or Waller, or

Denham would have disdained to sign. Lucasia was also the theme of some verses which close, at all events, in a very delicate harmony :

I did not live until this time
  Crowned my felicity,
When I could say, without a crime,
  I am not Thine, but Thee.

For as a watch by art is wound
  To motion, such was mine ;
But never had Orinda found
  A soul till she found thine.

Then let our flame still light and shine,
  And no false fear control,
As innocent as our design,
  Immortal as our soul.

The piece which Keats admired so much that he took the trouble of copying it in full, was inspired by Miss Mary Aubrey, and may be given here as a final example of the manner of Orinda :

I have examined and do find
  Of all that favour me,
There's none I grieve to leave behind,
  But only, only thee :
To part with thee I needs must die,
Could parting separate thee and I.

But neither chance nor compliment
  Did element our love ;
'Twas sacred sympathy was lent
  Us from the Quire above.
That friendship Fortune did create
Still fears a wound from Time or Fate.

Our changed and mingled souls are grown
To such acquaintance now,
That, if each would resume her own,
Alas! we know not how;
We have each other so engrost,
That each is in the union lost.

And thus we can no absence know,
Nor shall we be confined;
Our active souls will daily go
To learn each other's mind.
Nay, should we never meet to sense
Our souls would hold intelligence.

Inspirèd with a flame divine,
I scorn to court a stay;
For from that noble soul of thine
I ne'er can be away.
But I shall weep when thou dost grieve,
Nor can I die whilst thou dost live.

By my own temper I shall guess
At thy felicity,
And only like thy happiness,
Because it pleaseth thee.
Or hearts at any time will tell
If thou or I be sick or well.

All honour sure I must pretend,
All that is good or great;
She that would be Rosania's friend
Must be at least complete;
If I have any bravery,
'Tis cause I have so much of thee.

Thy leiger soul in me shall lie,
And all thy thoughts reveal,
Then back again with mine shall fly,
And thence to me shall steal;
Thus still to one another tend:
Such is the sacred name of Friend.

Thus our twin souls in one shall grow,
  And teach the world new love,
Redeem the age and sex, and show
  A flame Fate dares not move:
And, courting Death to be our friend,
Our lives too shall together end.

A dew shall dwell upon our tomb
  Of such a quality,
That fighting armies thither come
  Shall reconcilèd be.
We'll ask no epitaph, but say,
ORINDA *and* ROSANIA.

For ten years Katherine Philips continued to live at Cardigan in the midst of this enthusiastic circle of friends, and in a social quiet that was broken only by her own agitations of spirit. In 1654, in the seventh year of her marriage, she bore her first child, a son who was named Hector, and who lived only forty days. She bewails his loss in many verses, which are not the less affecting because they are stiff in form. She was ultimately consoled for her boy's death by the birth of a girl, who survived her, and eventually married a Mr. Wogan of Pembrokeshire. It is unfortunate that we cannot trace the course of Orinda's intimacy with Jeremy Taylor, although it is most probable that he visited her Society at Cardigan during the years that he lived near to her in Carmarthenshire. At all events, when, in 1659, he dedicated his *Discourse on the Nature, Offices, and Measures of Friendship* to "the most ingenious and excellent Mrs. Katherine Philips," he paid her the most delicate and affectionate compliments, and showed

himself well acquainted with the tenor of her mind. His treatise was, indeed, a public testimony, from a man of the highest authority, to the success with which she had proved women to be capable of the serene and exalted virtue of friendship.

This tribute from the famous Bishop of Down and Connor inaugurated that brief period during which Orinda ceased to be a provincial notoriety, and became for the small remainder of her life a prominent figure in contemporary society. At the Restoration she sang out loud and clear, in strains that were proved to be sincere by her long and unflinching resistance to the Commonwealth. As Arion she goes forth to meet his Majesty upon a dolphin :

> Whom does this stately navy bring ?
> O, 'tis Great Britain's glorious King !
> Convey him then, ye Winds and Seas,
> Swift as desire and calm as peace.
> Charles and his mighty hopes you bear ;
> A greater now than Cæsar's here,
> Whose veins a richer purple boast
> Than ever hero's yet engrossed,
> Sprung from a father so august
> He triumphs in his very dust.

She hails the fine weather for the coronation as a " bright parenthesis " placed by Heaven itself between two storms of rain, and she indites separate copies of verses to all the ladies of the royal family. Soon the Duchess of York becomes aware of this ardent poetess in the West, and commands her to send some specimens of her poems ; and in a little time we find Orinda, unable to stay at Cardigan

when the world of London had suddenly become so distractingly interesting, on a visit to town. We find her the guest of Cowley at Barn Elms, and invited to inscribe her name on one of his ancient trees. And at the close of this visit to London in 1661 she suddenly becomes vividly present to us for the rest of her life.

We have already mentioned her friendship for Sir Charles Cotterel, whom she named Poliarchus. He was a Royalist courtier of great elegance and erudition, who had long been steward to the Queen of Bohemia, and was now master of the ceremonies at the Court of Charles II. He dabbled gracefully in literature, was a very accomplished linguist, and long after the death of Orinda achieved an ephemeral reputation as the translator of the novels of La Calprenède. He survived Katherine Philips nearly a quarter of a century, dying in 1687, and what then became of his collection of her letters does not appear. In 1705, however, forty years after her death, Bernard Lintott published, without any bibliographical information, forty-eight *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, which are not only extremely well written and vivacious, but full of autobiographical matter, and amply furnished with dates. By means of these letters we can follow Orinda closely through the last and most interesting months of her life.

The first letter is dated from Acton, December 1, 1661. She has come up to London to prosecute some business for her husband, and is staying with his brother, to the members of whose family she

had at various occasions indited poems. Sir Charles Cotterel has paid her a visit, in the course of which he has confided to her his hopeless passion for a lady named Calanthe, and she is full of concern for his peace of mind. Mr. Matthew Arnold has pointed out how suddenly the prose of the Restoration threw off its traditional involutions and false ornament, and became in a great measure the prose that we wish to use to-day. The *Letters* of Orinda form a singular instance of the truth of this criticism, and compare very favourably with such letters as those of Howell in point of simplicity of style. Thus, for instance, she refers to Sir Charles Cotterel's agitation of mind :

" The great disturbance you were in when you went hence, and the high and just concern I have for you, have made me take the resolution to trouble you with my most humble and earnest request to resist the attempts your present passion is like to make on your quiet, before it grows too imperious to be checked by the powers of either reason or friendship. There is nothing more easy than to captivate one's self to love or grief, and no more evident mark of a great soul than to avoid those bondages. I hope, therefore, you will not think it altogether unbecoming the friendship you have given me leave to profess for you, to entreat you to overcome those passions, and not give way to melancholy, which will unhinge your excellent temper, and bring so great a cloud on the happiness of your friends. Consider for how many important

interests you are responsible, and exert all the powers of reason with which your excellent judgement abounds, to shake off your sorrows, and live cheerfully and long the delight of all who have the honour of your acquaintance."

Calanthe had been in correspondence with Orinda, and that faithless confidante had shown her letters to Poliarchus, hence many entreaties that her weakness may not be divulged to the injured fair. It is plain that Orinda greatly enjoyed her position as go-between in this interesting love affair, which, however, very shortly languished, and left upon the ensuing correspondence only this trace, that Sir Charles Cotterel having written such passages in his letters to Orinda as were not to be read by Calanthe in Italian, Orinda was obliged to learn that language, to which, indeed, she forthwith gave herself very assiduously. Her visit to London came to an end in March 1662, and she wrote to Poliarchus a sprightly letter from Gloucester on her return journey. A very interesting letter, dated Cardigan Priory, March 18, announced her return. She found Wales exceedingly dull at first, after the pleasures of courtly and literary society in London. She complained that she could not find any satisfaction in " my beloved rocks and rivers, formerly my best entertainment," and she longed to be able once more to enjoy Sir Charles Cotterel's conversation, which was to her " above all the flights of panegyrick." Her one consolation was that

the faithful Lucasia was still at Cardigan, though threatening every day to be gone to her own home. Descending to mundane things, poor Orinda confessed that she had been much disappointed in the condition of her husband. He is dull, apathetic, and depressed, was roused to no interest by her account of the conduct of his affairs in London, and terrifies her by his absolute indifference to business. From the sluggishness of Antenor she turns again to the pleasures of literature, and by an amusing affectation characteristic of the school she belonged to, she tells Poliarchus that she is reading English books with patience and French ones with pleasure.

She spent the month of April with her beloved friend at Landshipping, but, alas! the hour of the apostasy of Lucasia was approaching. While Orinda was amusing herself with the idea that Poliarchus was showing her poems at Court, and while she was signing herself to him "more than all the world besides your faithful Valentine," Miss Anne Owen was herself accepting a valentine in a less platonic sense. It seems to have all happened at Landshipping under the very nose of Orinda, without attracting the attention of that active creature. When at last she found it out, she was beside herself with chagrin and indignation. The bridegroom was a son of Sir Thomas Hanmer, and the match was one thoroughly approved of by both families. Orinda, as she says herself, "alone of all the company was out of humour; nay, I was vexed to that degree that I could not disguise my

concern, which many of them were surprised to see, and spoke to me of it ; but my grief was too deeply rooted to be cured with words." Her position, indeed, was a very trying one ; nor ought we to smile at the disappointment of this worthy little lady, who had worshipped a divinity so long only to find her suddenly composed of common clay.

The event was certainly hurried, for before the middle of May Lucasia was married, Orinda meanwhile indulging herself in transports of jealousy, and in long correspondence on the subject with Rosania and Poliarchus. When the young people were actually married, Orinda remained with them at Landshipping, and when they prepared to go over to Ireland, where the bride's new home was, she announced her intention of accompanying them. The vigilance of friendship, however, was not the only or the main cause of this determination. There were several suits to be tried in Dublin, involving heavy gains or losses to her husband, and as he could by no means be roused to an interest in these, Mrs. Philips resolved to undertake them herself. On July 19, 1662, she writes from Rosstrevor, in County Down, where she had been enjoying the society of Jeremy Taylor, who had been settled something less than two years in his diocese. This august companionship did not prevent Orinda from exercising a sharp supervision over the newly married pair. She informs Poliarchus, in a strain of the finest unconscious humour, that she believes the bridegroom to be of

a most stubborn and surly humour, although, " to speak sincerely, she has not been able hitherto to detect in him the marks of any ill nature," and what exasperates her most of all, in her character of the social banshee, is that Lucasia herself " pretends to be the most satisfied creature in the world."

In July 1662, Mrs. Philips began what was evidently the happiest year of her life by taking up her abode in Dublin. At the Restoration the great difficulty of settling the claims of those Irish gentlemen who demanded the King's favour, and the endless litigations respecting the forfeited lands in Ireland, brought over to Dublin a large company of distinguished lawyers with their families, and gave the city a temporary show and glitter. It was many years before affairs were in any degree arranged, and the English colony in Dublin settled down to enjoy themselves as best they might. Orinda found herself thrown at once into the distinguished company which gathered round the Lord-Lieutenant, the great first Duke of Ormonde, and she received an exceptionally warm welcome in the family of the Countess of Cork. Of all the Boyles, however, at that moment, the most influential was Roger, Earl of Orrery, whose enthusiastic admiration for Orinda displayed itself at once in every species of compliment and hospitality. He was eminent alike as a soldier, a statesman, and a poet, was one of the most influential men in the three kingdoms, and at that moment was engaged in Ireland upon a most

arduous and painful office. He had just been appointed Lord Chief Justice of Ireland under the Duke of Ormonde, and his friendship was not merely flattering and agreeable to Orinda, but extremely advantageous. He placed her among the ladies of his family, obtained for her the protection and personal friendship of Lady Cork, and in fact did all that was possible to make her stay in Dublin pleasant.

Another distinguished person with whom she swore eternal friendship in Dublin was the young Earl of Roscommon, not yet famous as the author of the *Essay on Translated Verse*, and indeed only twenty-eight years of age, but already looked upon as a patron of poetry, and as a very agreeable and eligible bachelor, "distempered," unfortunately, "with a fatal affection for play." Another Dublin acquaintance was James Tyrell, the politician and historian; yet another was John Ogilby, a man belonging to a generation earlier than all these, who had successfully outwitted Sir William Davenant, and had contrived to persuade Charles II. to send him out to Dublin as Master of the Revels. Ogilby is still sometimes remembered as the translator of the *Odyssey* and of the *Æneid*. That Orinda impressed all these persons with a great sense of her intellectual power and moral excellence, is evident from the nature of the eulogies they poured upon her while she lived and long after she died. When a man in the position of Lord Orrery says in print of a little plain Welsh lady of the middle class—

Madam, when I but knew you by report,
I feared the praises of the admiring Court
Were but their compliments, but now I must
Confess, what I thought civil is scarce just—

we may be sure that he is trying to express with sincerity a very genuine admiration. Nor is the Earl of Roscommon, who addresses her as "Dear Friend," less sincere, though more ridiculous, when he states it to be his experience that when he meets hungry wolves in the Scythian snows,

The magic of Orinda's name
Not only can their fierceness tame,
But, if that mighty word I once rehearse,
They seem *submissively to roar in verse.*

On one of the earliest occasions upon which Mrs. Philips met Lord Orrery, in August 1662, she ventured to show him her latest effusion, a scene she had translated from the third act of Corneille's tragedy of *Pompèe*. Orrery admired it excessively, and laid his entreaties, almost his commands, upon her to complete it in the same style—that is, in rhymed heroic verse. She set to work and completed the task, a very considerable one, by the middle of October. She found that it relieved her, in combination with select passages from Seneca and Epictetus, from absolutely breaking her heart over Lucasia, whose husband at last insisted on taking her back to their house at Rosstrevor. Orinda, ensconced in her snug nest of quality at Dublin, full of literary ambition, and scribbling day and night at *Pompey*,

seems to have missed her friend as little as could be expected. She was treated as a very great celebrity; and when she had occasion to hand round some manuscript verses which Cowley had just sent her for approval, she must have felt that her cup of literary importance was full.

Thus caressed by Lady Cork and complimented by all the lettered earls, she passed the months of August and September 1662 in a sort of golden dream, scarcely finding time, amid all her avocations, to write a hasty letter to the devoted Poliarchus, to whom, however, *Pompey* was sent in quick instalments. She gives him an interesting account, in October, of the theatre which the new master of the revels, Ogilby, was building at Dublin—a theatre that cost £2000 to put up. She holds it to be much finer than Davenant's in London; and she is present when the season opens with a performance of Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *Wit without Money*. As soon as the rough draft of *Pompey* was finished, she busied herself with her husband's affairs—"putting in Antenor's claim as an adventurer in my father's right here in Ireland"—and this, with two other minor lawsuits, occupies her spare time until the summer of the ensuing year. Her most serious attention, however, settles upon *Pompey*. Sir Charles Cotterel takes so much interest in it that she says, "I look on you as more a friend to me than David was to Jonathan"; but she shows a little temper when he offers some verbal criticism. For instance, and this is interesting historically, he

objects to the word *effort* as not English, and she replies that it has been naturalised here these twelve years. She might have added that Cotgrave had included it in his dictionary, in 1660.

Orinda spent the winter of 1662 at Dublin, touching up the text of *Pompey*, writing songs for it, and having them put to music—not without regret that her friend, the great Henry Lawes, who died just as the first manuscript of the play reached London, could not adorn them with immortal strains. Lord Orrery, who looked upon himself as the "onlie begetter" of this tragedy, moved heaven and earth to bring it out upon the stage; and, when Ogilby had made arrangements for its representation, Orrery spent £100 out of his own pocket to buy handsome Egyptian and Roman dresses and bring out the tragedy in style. It was dedicated to his mother, Lady Cork. Lord Roscommon wrote the prologue, and Sir Edward Dering the epilogue; each of them so ordered their verses that they should be delivered by the actor while turning to the Duke of Ormonde's box. New dances and a masque were introduced here and there by Ogilby, and on the second week of February 1663 it was finally presented to the public. It enjoyed an unbounded success; but, unfortunately, the letter in which Mrs. Philips gave Sir Charles Cotterel an account of the performance has not been preserved. Her friends, however, pressed her to print the play, and from the success which attended this experiment we may judge of the reception of the piece on the boards. An

edition of five hundred was printed, a single packet only being sent to London, and in a fortnight the whole of the impression was sold. In London the demand was so great, that hardly had the few copies sent arrived at the capital, than Mr. Herringman, the poets' publisher in those early days of the Restoration, wrote to ask Orinda's leave to bring out a London edition.

Meanwhile, Orinda had certain literary experiences. She made the acquaintance of Samuel Tuke, whose very successful play, the *Adventures of Five Hours*, was awakening delusive hopes of a great new dramatist; and she welcomed in *Hudibras* the advent of one much greater than Tuke. Her first impulse of criticism was that which the world has endorsed: "In my life I never read anything so naturally and so knowingly burlesque." In May, her troubles as an authoress began. A miscellany of poems by living writers appeared, in which some of her lyrics were pirated and widely advertised; and her serenity was shaken, a week or two later, by the fact that two London publishers were quarrelling for *Pompey*, and did, in fact, bring out, in the month of June, two simultaneous editions of that lucky play. And now it came to her knowledge that, while she had been thus busily employed, she had cut the ground from under the feet of some of the most celebrated wits of the day; for Waller had set his heart on translating *Pompée*, and had finished one act before Orinda's version was heard of. The other four acts had been supplied by Sir Edward

Fillmore, Sir Charles Sedley, and the young men who were afterwards known as the Earls of Dorset and Middlesex. As early as January 1663 it was announced that this translation was complete and immediately to appear. The success, however, of the Irish version checked the London one; and Orinda, hearing nothing of her illustrious rivals, became frightened, and wrote to Waller a letter deprecating his anger. His reply, which reached her early in June, reassured her; the courtly poet was characteristically smooth, courteous, and obliging, and, if he felt annoyance, contrived most wittily to avoid the show of it. At last, on July 16, 1663, having gained the two most important of her three suits, Mrs. Philips set sail from Dublin to Milford, and went home to her husband at Cardigan after an absence of exactly twelve months.

She found the excellent Antenor much improved in health, and she settled down to spend the autumn and winter at home. Her new importance as a woman of letters, and her large London correspondence, however, exposed her to a fresh annoyance. The postmaster at Carmarthen scandalously neglected his duty, and letters were constantly delayed and lost. The gentry of the neighbourhood, however, stirred up by the ever-energetic Orinda, sent in a memorial to O'Neil, the Postmaster-General, and the indolence at Carmarthen received a sharp reprimand. She found the winter tedious after her happy life at Dublin; she does not complain, but her letters to Sir Charles Cotterel are dejected in tone, and her

appeals to her friends to find something in London for her husband to do are constant and pathetic. And now another annoyance occurred. A piratical London publisher managed to obtain copies of all her miscellaneous poems, which she had refused to print, and brought them out surreptitiously in November 1663, the title-page dated 1664. Her friends wrote to her to condole, but did not send her the book, and her anxiety and vexation, combined with the rumour that the verses were very incorrectly printed, threw her into a sharp attack of illness. The volume, however, is not particularly incorrect, and it was prefaced by an ode of Cowley's which should have been balm to the breast of the wounded poetess. In it that eminent rhetorician, speaking in the consciousness of his enormous prestige, addressed her in terms of the highest and most affectionate eulogy, and contrived to throw into one stanza, at least, of his encomiastic ode, some of the most delicately felicitous compliments that a poet ever addressed to a sister in Apollo:

> Thou dost my wonder, would'st my envy raise,
> If to be praised I loved more than to praise;
> I must admire to see thy well-knit sense,
> Thy numbers gentle, and thy fancies high,
> These as thy forehead smooth, these sparkling as thine eye.
> 'Tis solid and 'tis manly all,
> Or rather, 'tis angelical!
> For, as in angels, we
> Do in thy verses see
> Both improved sexes eminently meet,—
> They are than Man more strong, and more than Woman sweet.

In January 1664 she took in hand another play of Corneille's, and that the one most popular in England through his lifetime—*Horace*. It had been translated before, by Sir William Lower, in 1656, and was attempted later on by Charles Cotton, in 1671. Orinda worked slowly at this, and brought four acts of it, all she was destined to complete, with her when she came to London in March. She was absolutely unable to stay any longer in suspense, and she thought that her energy and influence might secure some post for her husband if she came right up to town. The last three months of her life were brilliantly spent; she was warmly welcomed at court and in the best society. Her last verses, signed June 10, 1664, were addressed in terms of affectionate respect to the Archbishop of Canterbury. They breathe the old ardour, the old moral elevation, the old eager note of the enthusiastic Orinda. Twelve days later she was dead, a victim to small-pox, that frightful disease to which the science of the day saw no hope of resistance. She had but half completed her thirty-fourth year. She was buried under a great slab in the church of St. Bennet Sherehog, among the remains of her ancestors.

Thus, in the middle of a brilliant social and literary success, the abhorred shears slipped in and cut the thread. The memory of the matchless Orinda was celebrated in numberless odes. All the Royalist poets combined to do her honour. Cowley mourned her in a massive lyric. Denham demanded the privilege of concluding her *Horace*.

Her name was mentioned with those of Sappho and Corinna, and language was used without reproach which might have seemed a little fulsome if addressed to the Muse herself.

For half a century Orinda was an unquestioned light in English song; then she sank into utter darkness. But her memory is worthy of some judicious revival. She presents us with a clearly defined and curious type of the literary woman, and there are few such in our early literature. She secured the affectionate esteem of the principal people of her time, and we know enough of her character to see that she could not but secure it; and if she sinned against poetry, as we understand it, much may be forgiven her, for she loved it much.

Fifteen years after the death of Orinda there was published in London a volume of *Female Poems*, which now forms one of the rarest books of the Restoration. This little volume was anonymous, but was said to be "written by Ephelia," and we are told that Ephelia was a certain Miss Joan Philips. I do not know whether I start too wild a theory when I acknowledge that it has several times crossed my mind that Ephelia may have been Orinda's only daughter, who, as we have said, eventually married a Mr. Wogan, of Pembrokeshire. This daughter seems to have been born about 1656, and accordingly would be twenty-three in 1679. The portrait of Ephelia affixed to

her poems, and the description she gives of her person would tally closely enough with this hypothesis; and she expressly speaks of herself as deprived of her parents in early life, and as having soon after lost the property which they bequeathed to her. However this may be, the poems of Joan Philips are closely modelled upon those of Katherine Philips, even to the form of her addresses to royalty and to the enthusiastic pseudonyms which she gives to her friends. That she does not refer to any such relationship would be amply accounted for by her desire to conceal her name, which the extremely confidential nature of her effusions made imperative. Her little book deserves mention as an appendix to Orinda's, not merely because it may be written by a relation and is certainly quite unknown to students, but also on account of its inherent merit. It is a sincere page out of the heart of a human being—a series of confessions so true and so poignant that we seem to hear a living voice across two centuries. In its warmth and vivacity, its womanly passion and subtlety, I know no utterance like it except the sonnets of Louise Labé. A real human voice is so rare in Restoration literature, that we may listen for a few moments to this not very tuneful one.

Ephelia tells us her story without any maidenly reserve, but with a great deal of nature. Her earliest poems show her, as Orinda had been before her, enslaved to a circle of fair friends of her own sex. One day she meets Strephon, or J. G., whose surname appears from an acrostic to

have been Gilbert, and she falls in love with him at first sight. He is much older than she, and does not for some time respond to her passion; but by degrees he melts to her, and they are engaged to be married. J. G., however, is offered a valuable appointment in the factory at Tangiers, and he rides away under her bower-eaves, like a false knight in a ballad, and sets sail without even bidding her farewell. She hears first a rumour that he is paying court to a lady of wealth in Morocco, and then that he had married This, "the best-born among the Afric maids." Ephelia loudly bewails her fate and Strephon's unkindness, and presents the public with a volume of poems in which every shade of emotion, as it passed through her mind, has been conscientiously transferred to verse. The result is extraordinary.

Joan Philips is a very unequal writer, but at her best she attains some undeniable vigour in the use of the heroic couplet. The following example gives as good an impression of her style as the reader can require; it is a passage inspired by the first suspicion of J. G.'s unfaithfulness:

> Why do I love? go, ask the glorious sun
> Why every day it round the world doth run;
> Ask Thames and Tiber, why they ebb and flow;
> Ask damask roses, why in June they blow;
> Ask ice and hail, the reason why they're cold;
> Decaying beauties, why they will grow old;
> They'll tell thee, fate, that everything doth move,
> Inforces them to this, and me to love.
> There is no reason for our love or hate,
> 'Tis irresistible as Death or Fate;

'Tis not his face ; I've seen enough to see
That is not good, though doted on by me ;
Nor is't his tongue that has this conquest won,
For that at least is equalled by my own ;
His carriage can to none obliging be,
'Tis rude, affected, full of vanity,
Strangely ill-natured, peevish and unkind,
Unconstant, false, to jealousy inclined ;
His temper could not have so great a power,
'Tis mutable and changes every hour ;
Those vigorous years, that women so adore,
Are past in him, he's twice my age and more ;
And yet I love this false, this worthless man
With all the passion that a woman can,
Dote on his imperfections, though I spy
Nothing to love, I love, and know not why.
Save 'tis decreed in the dark book of fate,
That I should love, and he should be ingrate.

The artificial accent of the age is entirely absent here, as elsewhere in Ephelia, and her couplets are not without vigour. Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe* had not been acted without profit to the ear of this young lady, who might, one fancies, under proper training, have become a genuine poet. She mentions Waller and Cowley with enthusiasm, and addresses a copy of rhymes to Aphra Behn, complimenting her on her "strenuous polite verses." In all this she is the child of her age. But her misfortunes, her amazing frankness in the analysis of her feelings, and the possibility that she was Orinda's daughter, lift her out of the region of commonplace.

1881.

There was a second edition of Ephelia's *Poems*, for a knowledge of which I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Edward H. Bierstadt, of New York. It consists of the sheets of the first edition, with a new title dated 1682, and twenty-eight additional leaves at the end containing thirty-two new poems. At least nine of these additional poems are taken from the first (1680) edition of Rochester, and many of the others are of such a character as to make us hope that the chaste Ephelia not merely did not write, but never read them.

LORD CROMER AS A MAN OF LETTERS

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In the obituary notices which attended the death of Lord Cromer, it was necessary and proper that almost the whole space at the command of the writers should be taken up by a sketch of his magnificent work as an administrator, or, as the cant phrase goes, "an empire-builder." For thirty years, during which time he advanced to be one of the most powerful and efficient of pro-consuls, he held a place in the political world which arrested the popular imagination, and must continue to outweigh all other aspects of his character. Of this side of Lord Cromer's splendid career I am not competent to say a word. But there was another facet of it, one more private and individual, which became prominent after his retirement, I mean his intellectual and literary activity, which I had the privilege of observing. It would be a pity, perhaps, to let this be wholly submerged, and I propose to give, from my own recollection, some features of it. Lord Cromer was the author of six or seven published volumes, but these are before the public, and it is needless to speak much about them. What may be found more interesting are a few impressions of his attitude towards books and towards ideas.

On the first occasion on which I met him, he was characteristic. It was some fifteen years ago, at the time when the brilliant young politicians who called themselves (or were rather ineptly called) the Hooligans had the graceful habit of asking some of their elders to dine with them in a private room of the House of Commons. At one of these little dinners the only guests were Lord Cromer and myself. I had never seen him before, and I regarded him with some awe and apprehension, but no words had passed between us, when the division-bell rang, and our youthful hosts darted from the room.

The moment we were left alone, Lord Cromer looked across the deserted tablecloth and said quietly, as though he were asking me to pass the salt, "Where is Bipontium?" I was driven by sheer fright into an exercise of intelligence, and answered at once, "I should think it must be the Latin for Zweibrücken. Why?" "Oh! I saw this afternoon that my edition of Diodorus Siculus was printed *ex typographia societatis Bipontinæ*, and I couldn't imagine for the life of me what 'Bipontium' was. No doubt you're quite right." Nothing could be more characteristic of Lord Cromer's habit of mind than this sudden revulsion of ideas. His active brain needed no preparation to turn from subject to subject, but seemed to be always ready, at a moment's notice, to take up a fresh line of thought with ardour. What it could not endure was to be left stranded with no theme on which to expatiate. In succeeding years, when

it was often my daily enjoyment to listen to Lord Cromer's desultory conversation, as it leaped from subject to subject, I often thought of the alarming way in which " Bipontium " had pounced upon me at the dinner-table in the House of Commons.

Some years passed before I had the privilege of renewing my experience of that evening. It was not until after his retirement from Egypt in the autumn of 1907 that I saw him again, and not then for some months. He returned, it will be remembered, in broken health. He used to say that when King Edward VII. wrote out to Cairo, strongly pressing him to stay, he had replied, in the words of Herodotus, " I am too old, oh King, and too inactive ; so bid thou one of the younger men here to do these things." He very soon, however, recovered elasticity of mind and body when the load of office was removed from his shoulders, and " inactive " was the last epithet which could ever be applied to Lord Cromer. He began to attend the House of Lords, but, like a wise man, he was in no hurry to speak there till he had grown accustomed to the tone of the place. His earliest utterance (I may note the date, February 6, 1908) we listened to with equal respect and curiosity ; this was a new element from which much enjoyment might be expected.

This maiden speech was not long, but it produced a very happy impression. The subject was the Anglo-Russian Convention, of which the orator cordially approved, and I recall that a certain sensation was caused by Lord Cromer's dwelling

on the dangers of the Pan-Islamite intrigues in Egypt. This is the sort of thing that the House of Lords enjoys—a man of special knowledge speaking, almost confidentially, of matters within his professional competency. During that year and the next Lord Cromer spoke with increasing frequency. There were great differences of opinion with regard to his efficiency in Parliament. I may acknowledge that I was not an unmeasured admirer of his oratory. When he rose from his seat on the Cross-bench, and advanced towards the table, with a fine gesture of his leonine head, sympathy was always mingled with respect. His independence and his honesty were patent, and his slight air of authority satisfactory. His public voice was not unpleasing, but when he was tired it became a little veiled, and he had the sad trick of dropping it at the end of his sentences. I confess that I sometimes found it difficult to follow what he was saying, and I do not think that he understood how to fill a large space with his voice. He spoke as a man accustomed to wind up the debates of a council sitting round a table, rather than as a senator addressing the benches of Parliament.

He was interested in the art of eloquence, and fond of criticising in private the methods of other speakers. He had a poor opinion of much studied oratory, and used to declare that no one had ever convinced him by merely felicitous diction. Perhaps he did not sufficiently realise that his own strength of purpose offered rather a granitic surface to persuasion. But no doubt he was right in saying

that, coming as he did from the florid East, he found English eloquence more plain and business-like than he left it. He used to declare that he never spoke impromptu if he could possibly help doing so, and he made great fun of the statesmen who say, " Little did I think when I came down to this House to-day that I should be called upon to speak," and then pour out by heart a Corinthian discourse. Lord Cromer always openly and frankly prepared his speeches, and I have seen him entranced in the process. As he always had a classical reference for everything he did, he was in the habit of mentioning that Demosthenes also was unwilling to "put his faculty at the mercy of Fortune."

He became an habitual attendant at the House of Lords, and, while it was sitting, he usually appeared in the Library about an hour before the House met. He took a very lively interest in what was going on, examining new books, and making a thousand suggestions. If the Lords' Library contains to-day one of the most complete collections of Latin and Greek literature in the country, this is largely due to the zeal of Lord Cromer, who was always egging me on to the purchase of fresh rarities. He was indefatigable in kindness, sending me booksellers' catalogues in which curious texts were recorded, and scouring even Paris and Leipzig in our behalf. When I entered into this sport so heartily as to provide the Greek and Latin Fathers also for their Lordships, Lord Cromer became unsympathetic. He had no interest

whatever in Origen or Tertullian, and I think it rather annoyed him to recall that several of these oracles of the early Church had written in Greek. Nothing in history or philosophy or poetry which the ancient world had handed down to us came amiss to Lord Cromer, but I think he considered it rather impertinent of the Fathers to have presumed to use the language of Attica. He had not an ecclesiastical mind.

Lord Cromer's familiar preoccupation with the classics was a point in his mental habits which deserves particular attention. I have always supposed that he inherited it from his mother, the Hon. Mrs. Baring, who was a Windham. She was a woman of learning; and she is said to have discomfited Sir William Harcourt at a dinner-table by quoting Lucan in direct disproof of a statement about the Druids which he had been rash enough to advance. She sang the odes of Anacreon to her son in his infancy, and we may conjecture that she sowed in his bosom the seeds of his love of antiquity. Lord Cromer made no pretension to be what is called an "exact" scholar, but I think it is a mistake to say, as has been alleged, that he did not take up the study of Latin and Greek until middle life. It is true that he enjoyed no species of university training, but passed from Woolwich straight into the diplomatic service. In 1861, at the age of twenty, he was appointed A.D.C. to Sir Henry Storks in the Ionian Islands, and I believe that one of the first things he did was to look about for an instructor in ancient Greek. He found one

in a certain Levantine in Corfu, whose name was Romano, and their studies opened with the odes of Anacreon. Whether this was a coincidence, or a compliment to Mrs. Baring, I do not know. This is a rather different account from what Lord Cromer gave in the preface to his *Paraphrases*, but I report it on his own later authority.

If his scholarship was not professorial, it was at least founded upon a genuine and enduring love of the ancient world. I suppose that for fifty years, after the episode in Corfu, however busy he was, however immersed in Imperial policy, he rarely spent a day without some communing with antiquity. He read Latin, and still more Greek, not in the spirit of a pedant or a pedagogue, but genuinely for pleasure and refreshment. He had no vanity about it, and if he had any doubt as to the meaning of a passage he would "consult the crib," as he used to say. We may conjecture further that he did not allow his curiosity to be balked by the barrier of a hopelessly obscure passage, but leaped over it, and went on. He always came back to Homer, whom he loved more than any other writer of the world, and particularly to the *Iliad*, which I think he knew nearly by heart. But he did not, as some pundits consider dignified and necessary, confine himself to the reading of the principal classics in order to preserve a pure taste. On the contrary, Lord Cromer, especially towards the close of his life, pushed up into all the byways of the Silver Age. As he invariably talked about the books he happened to be reading, it was

easy to trace his footsteps. Eight or nine years ago he had a sudden passion for Empedocles, whose fragments he had found collected and translated by Mr. Leonard, an American. Lord Cromer used to march into the Library, and greet me by calling out, "Do you know? Empedocles says" something or other, probably some parallelism with a modern phrase, the detection of which always particularly amused Lord Cromer.

In 1908 he took a fancy to Theognis, whose works I procured for him at the House of Lords, since he happened not to possess that writer at 36 Wimpole Street. He would settle himself in an armchair in the smoking-room, his eyes close to the book, and plunge into those dark waters of the gnomic elegist. He loved maxims and the expression of principles, and above all, as I have said, the discovery of identities of thought between the modern and the ancient world. He was delighted when he found in Theognis the proverb about having an ox on the tongue. I suppose this was quite well known to the learned, but the charm of the matter for Lord Cromer was that he was not deterred by any fear of academic criticism, and found out these things for himself. He read Theognis as other people read Rudyard Kipling, for stimulus and pleasure. He swept merely "scholarly" questions aside. He read his *Iliad* like a love-letter, but he was bored to death by discussions about the authorship of the Homeric epics.

In one matter, the serene good sense which was

so prominently characteristic of Lord Cromer tinged his attitude towards the classics. He was not at all like Thomas Love Peacock, who entreated his friends to desist from mentioning anything that had happened in the world for the last 2000 years. On the contrary, Lord Cromer was always bent on binding the old and the new together. It was very noticeable in his conversation that he was fond of setting classic instances side by side with modern ones. If books dealt with this parallelism, they exercised a charm over Lord Cromer's imagination which may sometimes have led him a little astray about their positive value. I recall a moment when he was completely under the sway of M. Ferrero's *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, largely because of the pertinacity with which the Italian historian compares Roman institutions with modern social arrangements. It was interesting to the great retired proconsul to discover that Augustus " considered that in the majority of cases subject peoples had to be governed through their own national institutions." It is scarcely necessary to point out that these analogies form the basis of what is, perhaps, Lord Cromer's most important late essay, his *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*.

In a practical administration of India and Egypt, those oceans of unplumbed antiquity, the ordinary British official has neither time nor taste to do more than skim the surface of momentary experience. But Lord Cromer had always been acutely aware of the mystery of the East, and

always looked back into the past with deep curiosity. Sometimes the modern life in Egypt, exciting as it was, almost seemed to him a phantasmagoria dancing across the real world of Rameses. This tendency of thought coloured one branch of his reading; he could not bear to miss a book which threw any light on the social and political manners of antiquity. Works like Fowler's *Social Life at Rome* or Marquardt's *Le Culte chez les Romains* thrilled him with excitement and animated his conversation for days He wanted, above all things, to realise how the ancients lived and what feelings actuated their behaviour. On one occasion, in a fit of gaiety, I ventured to tell him that he reminded me of Mrs. Blimber (in *Dombey and Son*), who could have died contented had she visited Cicero in his retirement at beautiful Tusculum. "Well!" replied Lord Cromer, laughing, "and a very delightful visit that would be."

In the admirable appreciation contributed to the *Times* by "C." (our other proconsular "C."!) it was remarked that the "quality of mental balance is visible in all that Lord Cromer wrote, whether in his official despatches, his published books, or his private correspondence." It was audible, too, in his delightful conversation, which was vivid, active, and yet never oppressive. He spoke with the firm accent of one accustomed to govern, but never dictatorially. His voice was a very agreeable one, supple and various in its tones, neither loud nor low. Although he had formed

the lifelong habit of expressing his opinions with directness, he never imposed them unfairly, or took advantage of his authority. On the contrary, there was something extremely winning in his eagerness to hear the reply of his interlocutor. "Well, there's a great deal in that," he would graciously and cordially say, and proceed to give the opposing statement what benefit he thought it deserved. He could be very trenchant, but I do not think that anyone whom he had advanced to the privilege of his confidence can remember that he was so to a friend.

The attitude of Lord Cromer to life and letters —I speak, of course, only of what I saw in the years of his retirement from office—was not exactly representative of our own or even of the last century. He would have been at home in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century, before the French Revolution. I judge him to have been born with an inflexible and commanding character, which in the person of many men exposed to such dangerous successes as he enjoyed might have degenerated into tyranny. On Lord Cromer, on the other hand, time produced a humanising and mellowing effect. It may very well prove that he has stamped his mark on the East of the twentieth century, as Turgot did his on the West of the nineteenth century; but without straying into the perilous fields of prophecy, we are safe in recording the impression that Lord Cromer was not altogether a man of to-day; he looked forward and he looked backward. Probably the

nearest counterpart to his manner of mind and conversation may be found in the circle of whom we read in the *Diary* of Fanny Burney. We can conceive Lord Cromer leaning against the Committee Box in earnest conversation with Mr. Windham and Mr. Burke at Warren Hastings' trial. We can restore the half-disdainful gesture with which he would drop an epigram (" from the Greek ") into the Bath Easton Vase. His politeness and precision, his classical quotations, his humour, his predilections in literature and art, were those of the inner circle of Whigs nearly a century and a half ago, and I imagine that their talk was very much like his.

He was fond of repeating Bagehot's description of the Whigs, and it seems to me to apply so exactly to himself that I will quote part of it :

" Perhaps as long as there has been a political history in this country there have been certain men of a cool, moderate, resolute firmness, not gifted with high imagination, little prone to enthusiastic sentiment, heedless of large theories and speculations, careless of dreamy scepticism, with a clear view of the next step, and a wise intention to take it ; a strong conviction that the elements of knowledge are true, and a steady belief that the present would, can, and should be quietly improved."

In a full analysis of Lord Cromer's character, I think that every clause of this description might be expanded with illustrations. In the intellectual domain, Bagehot's words, " little prone to en-

thusiastic sentiment," seem made to fit Lord Cromer's detachment from all the tendencies of romanticism. His literary tastes were highly developed and eagerly indulged, but they were all in their essence pre-Revolutionary. Those who are familiar with a book once famous, the *Diary of a Lover of Literature* of Thomas Green, written down to the very end of the eighteenth century, have in their hands a volume in which the very accents of Lord Cromer may seem to be heard. Isaac d'Israeli said that Green had humbled all modern authors in the dust; Lord Cromer had a short way with many of the writers most fashionable at this moment. When he was most occupied with the resuscitations of ancient manners, of which I have already spoken, I found to my surprise that he had never read *Marius the Epicurean*. I recommended it to him, and with his usual instant response to suggestion, he got it at once and began reading it. But I could not persuade him to share my enthusiasm, and, what was not like him, he did not read *Marius* to the end. The richness and complication of Pater's style annoyed him. He liked prose to be clear and stately; he liked it, in English, to be Addisonian. Even Gibbon—though he read *The Decline and Fall* over again, very carefully, so late as 1913—was not entirely to his taste. He enjoyed the limpidity and the irony, but the sustained roll of Gibbon's antitheses vexed him a little. He liked prose to be quite simple.

In many ways, Lord Cromer, during those long and desultory conversations about literature which

will be so perennial a delight to look back upon, betrayed his constitutional detestation of the Romantic attitude. He believed himself to be perfectly catholic in his tastes, and resented the charge of prejudice. But he was, in fact, irritated by the excesses and obscurities of much that is fashionable to-day in the world of letters, and he refused his tribute of incense to several popular idols. He thought that, during the course of the nineteenth century, German influences had seriously perturbed the balance of taste in Europe. I do not know that Lord Cromer had pursued these impressions very far, or that he had formed any conscious theory with regard to them. But he was very " eighteenth century " in his suspicion of enthusiasm, and I always found him amusingly impervious to ideas of a visionary or mystical order. It was impossible that so intelligent and omnivorous a reader as he should not be drawn to the pathetic figure of Pascal, but he was puzzled by him. He described him as " manifestly a man full of contrasts, difficult to understand, and as many-sided as Odysseus." On another occasion, losing patience with Pascal, he called him " a half-lunatic man of genius." Fénélon annoyed him still more; the spiritual experiences of the Archbishop of Cambrai he found " almost incomprehensible." His surprising, but after all perfectly consistent, comment on both Fénélon and Pascal was " How much more easy Buffon is to understand ! "

He recommended all young men who intend to

take a part in politics carefully to study pre-Revolutionary history, and one of his objections to the romantic literature of Rousseau downwards was that it did not help such study. It was too individualistic in its direction. It tended, moreover, Lord Cromer thought, to disturb the balance of judgement, that " level-headedness " which he valued so highly, and had exercised with such magnificent authority. He disliked the idea that genius involved a lack of sanity, or, in other words, of self-command. He regretted that Dryden had given general currency to this idea by his famous lines in *Absalom and Achitophel*:

> Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;

but Lord Cromer was himself, perhaps, too ready to account by insanity for every odd or confused expression in literature. He had nothing to say about Mazzini, whom he swept aside impatiently, except that he " was a semi-lunatic," and I have heard him declare of Chatterton and Verlaine—a strange couple—that they were a pair of madmen. He objected violently to Baudelaire, but I think he knew very little about that poet's works.

If I mention these things, it is because they seem to be necessary to give human character to any sketch of the mind of Lord Cromer. He himself hated mere eulogy, which he said had ruined most of the biographies of the world. The official lives of Disraeli and Gladstone did not escape a measure of his blame in this respect, and

it will be recalled that resentment against what he thought a shadowless portrait led to his own very vivacious paper on Disraeli, which he afterwards issued as a pamphlet. He was an avid reader of memoirs, and of political memoirs in particular, but he almost always passed upon them the same criticism—that they were too *public*. "I don't want Mr. ——," he would say, "to tell me what I can learn for myself by turning up the file of the *Morning Post*. I want him to tell me what I can't find out elsewhere. And he need not be so very much afraid of hinting that his hero had faults, for if he had not had defects we should never have heard of his qualities. We are none of us perfect, and we don't want a priggish biographer to pretend that we are." He was speaking here mainly of political matters; but Lord Cromer's training and experience had a strong bearing on his literary tastes. With him politics reacted on literature, although he liked to fancy that he kept them wholly apart.

No doubt a selection from his correspondence will one day be given to the world, for he was a vivid, copious, and daring letter-writer. I suppose that he wrote to each of his friends mainly on the subject which absorbed that friend most, and as his own range of sympathies and interests was very wide, it is probable that his letters will prove excellent general reading. As in so many other of the departments of life, Lord Cromer did not think letter-writing a matter to be lightly regarded or approached without responsibility. He said:

" There are two habits which I have contracted, and which I have endeavoured to pass on to my children, as I have found them useful. One is to shut the door after me when I leave the room, and the other is always to affix the day of the month and the year to every document, however unimportant, that I sign. I have received numbers of letters, not only from women, one of whose numerous privileges it is to be vague, but also from men in high official positions, dated with the day of the week only. When the document is important, such a proceeding is a fraud on posterity."

He often, both in conversation and in letters, took up one of his favourite classic tags, and wove a shrewd modern reflection round it. For instance, a couple of years before the war, a phrase of Aristotle recommending a ruthless egotism in the conduct of war, led him to say :

" I think that at times almost every modern nation has acted on this principle, though they gloss it over with fine words. Its principal exponents of late have unquestionably been the Hohenzollerns."

And, in connection with the axiom of Thucydides that war educates through violence, he wrote, about the same time :

" The Germans, who, in spite of their culture, preserve a strain of barbarism in their characters, are the modern representatives of this view. There

is just this amount of truth in it—that at the cost of undue and appalling sacrifices, war brings out certain fine qualities in individuals, and sometimes in nations."

This may, surely, be taken as a direct prophecy of the magnificent effort of France. Lord Cromer's reflections, thrown off in the warmth of personal contact, often had a pregnant directness. For instance, how good this is :

"The prejudice against the Bœotians was probably in a large measure due to the fact that, as the late Lord Salisbury might have said, they 'put their money on the wrong horse' during the Persian war. So also, it may be observed, did the oracle at Delphi."

Lord Cromer's public speeches and published writings scarcely give a hint of his humour, which was lambent and sometimes almost boyish. He loved to be amused, and he repaid his entertainer by being amusing. I suppose that after his return from Cairo he allowed this feature of his character a much freer run. The legend used to be that he was looked upon in Egypt as rather grim, and by no means to be trifled with. He was not the man, we may be sure, to be funny with a Young Turk, or to crack needless jokes with a recalcitrant Khedive. But retirement softened him, and the real nature of Lord Cromer, with its elements of geniality and sportiveness, came into full play.

Eight years ago, I regret to admit, Mr. Lloyd

George was not the universal favourite in the House of Lords that he has since become. Lord Cromer was one of those who were not entirely reconciled to the financial projects of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. He compared the Chancellor with Pescennius Niger,

"who aspired to be Emperor after the death of Pertinax, and was already Governor of Syria. On being asked by the inhabitants of that province to diminish the land tax, he replied that, so far as he was concerned, not only would he effect no diminution, but he regretted that he could not tax the air which they breathed."

The strained relations between Mr. Lloyd George and the House of Lords inspired Lord Cromer with a really delightful parallel from Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (which, by the way, was one of his favourite poems) :

> Thus, worn or weakened, well or ill content,
> Submit they must to DAVID'S government ;
> Impoverished and deprived of all command,
> Their taxes doubled as they lost their land ;
> And—what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
> Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood.

When he pointed this out to me, I entreated him to introduce it into a speech on the Budget. But he said that he was not sure of his audience, and then it was most painful to an orator to make a literary reference which was not taken up. Once at Sheffield, when he was urging the necessity of

a strong Navy upon a large public meeting, he quoted Swinburne's splendid lines :

> All our past comes wailing in the wind,
> And all our future thunders on the sea,

without producing any effect at all. But the House of Lords is not an illiterate audience, and I recollect that on one occasion, when Lord Cromer himself was speaking on preferential treatment for the Colonies, and quoted Prior :

> Euphemia (that is Preference) serves to grace my measure,
> But Chloe (that is Protection) is my real flame,

the Peers received the couplet with hilarious appreciation.

He was very entertaining about the oddities of his life in the East, and his stories were numberless. One was of a petition which he once received from a young Egyptian with a grievance, which opened with these words :

" O Hell ! Lordship's face grow red when he hear quite beastly behaviour of Public Works Department towards his humble servant."

He used to repeat these things with an inimitable chuckle of enjoyment.

We have been told that he who blows through bronze may breathe through silver. The severe preoccupations of Lord Cromer's public life did not prevent him from sedulously cultivating the art of verse. In 1903, before his retirement from Egypt, he published a volume of *Paraphrases and Translations from the Greek*, in the preparation

or selection of which I believe that he enjoyed the advice of Mr. Mackail. It was rather unlucky that, with a view to propitiate the angry critics, Lord Cromer prefixed to this little book a preface needlessly modest. He had no cause to apologise so deeply for exercises which were both elegant and learned. It is a curious fact that, in this collection of paraphrases, the translator did not touch the Attic authors whom he knew so well—he used to copy out pages of Æschylus and Sophocles in his loose Greek script, with notes of his own—but dealt entirely with lyric and epigrammatic poets of the Alexandrian age. Perhaps it seemed to him less daring to touch them than to affront Æschylus. He was not quite sure about these verses of his ; he liked them, and then he was afraid that they were unworthy of the original. Out in Cairo it was so difficult, he said, to get a critical opinion.

Among his unpublished translations there is one, from a fragment of Euripides, which should not be lost, if only because Lord Cromer himself liked it better than any other of his versions. It runs :

> I learn what may be taught ;
> I seek what may be sought ;
> My other wants I dare
> To ask from Heaven in prayer.

Of his satirical *vers-de-société*, which it amused him to distribute in private, he never, I believe, gave any to the world, but they deserve preservation. Some serious reflections on the advantages

of the British occupation of Egypt close with the quotation :

> Let them suffice for Britain's need—
> No nobler prize was ever won—
> The blessings of a people freed,
> The consciousness of duty done.

These were, in a high degree, the rewards of Lord Cromer himself.

After his settlement in London, Mr. T. E. Page sent him a book, called *Between Whiles*, of English verse translated into Latin and Greek. Lord Cromer was delighted with this, and the desire to write in metre returned to him. He used to send his friends, in letters, little triolets and epigrams, generally in English, but sometimes in Greek. But he was more ambitious than this. So lately as February 1911, during the course of one of our long conversations upon literature, he asked me to suggest a task of translation on which he could engage. It was just the moment when he was particularly busy with Constitutional Free Trade and Woman Suffrage and other public topics, but that made no difference. It had always seemed to me that he had been most happy in his versions of the Bucolic poets, and so I urged him to continue his translations by attempting the *Europa* of Moschus. He looked at it, and pronounced it unattractive. I was therefore not a little surprised to receive a letter, on March 25, in which he said :

" Not sleeping very well last night, I composed

in my head these few lines merely as a specimen to begin *Europa* :

> When dawn is nigh, at the third watch of night,
> What time, more sweet than honey of the bee,
> Sleep courses through the brain some vision bright,
> To lift the veil which hides futurity,
> Fair Cypris sent a fearful dream to mar
> The slumbers of a maid whose frightened eyes
> Pictured the direful clash of horrid war,
> And she, Europa, was the victor's prize.

" They are, of course, only a first attempt, and I do not think much of them myself. But do you think the sort of style and metre suitable ? "

He went steadily on till he completed the poem, and on April 27 I received a packet endorsed " Patched-up Moschus returned herewith." So far as I know, this version of the *Europa*, conducted with great spirit in his seventieth year, has never been published. It is the longest and most ambitious of all his poetical experiments.

Lord Cromer was fond of saying that he considered the main beauty of Greek poetry to reside in its simplicity. In all his verses he aimed at limpidity and ease. He praised the Greek poets for not rhapsodising about the beauties of nature, and this was very characteristic of his own eighteenth-century habit of mind. His general attitude to poetry, which he read incessantly and in four languages, was a little difficult to define. He was ready to give lists of his lifelong prime favourites, and, as was very natural, these differed from time to time. But one list of the books he

had "read more frequently than any other" consisted of the *Iliad*, the Book of Job, *Tristram Shandy*, and *Pickwick*, to which he added *Lycidas* and the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It would require a good deal of ingenuity to bring these six masterpieces into line. He was consistent in declaring that the 28th chapter of Job was "the finest bit of poetry ever written."

He was violently carried away in 1912 by reading Mr. Livingstone's book on *The Greek Genius*. It made him a little regret the pains he had expended on the Hymns of Callimachus and the Bucolics of Theocritus, and he thought that perhaps he ought to have confined himself to the severer and earlier classics. But surely he had followed his instinct, and it would have been a pity if he had narrowed his range. It was the modernness of the Alexandrian authors, and perhaps their Egyptian flavour, which had justly attracted him. He did not care very much for an antiquity which he could not revivify for his own vision. I urged him to read a book which had fascinated me, *The Religion of Numa*, by a learned American, the late Mr. Jesse Carter. Lord Cromer read it with respect, but he admitted that those earliest Roman ages were too remote and cold for him.

Lord Cromer was very much annoyed with Napoleon for having laid it down that *après soixante ans, un homme ne vaut rien*. The rash dictum had certainly no application to himself. It is true that, under the strain of the long tropical years, his bodily health declined as he approached

the age of sixty. But his mental activity, his marvellous receptivity, were not merely maintained, but seemed steadily to advance. He continued to be consumed by that lust for knowledge, *libido sciendi*, which he admired in the ancient Greeks. When the physicians forbade him, four years ago, to expend his failing strength any longer on political and social propaganda, instead of retiring, as most men of his age would have done, to dream in the recesses of his library, he plunged with renewed ardour into the one occupation still permitted to him: literature. The accident of his publishing a criticism which excited wide popular attention led to his becoming, when past his seventieth birthday, a "regular reviewer" for the *Spectator*, where the very frequent papers signed "C." became a prominent feature. Those articles were, perhaps, most remarkable for the light they threw on the writer's own temperament, on his insatiable desire for knowledge. Lord Cromer's curiosity in all intellectual directions was, to the last, like that of a young man beginning his mental career; and when he adopted the position, so uncommon in a man of his experience and authority, of a reviewer of current books, it was because he wished to share with others the excitement he himself enjoyed in the tapping of fresh sources of information.

1917.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

In the course of an earnest and sober appeal for a revision of our attitude of mind towards the Sacred Books, I meet with this statement of fact: "No scholar now holds the old doctrine of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures." Such a pronouncement, coming from no revolutionary source, but from the pen of Professor A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, who is one of the most conservative and responsible thinkers of our age, is calculated to set in action a memory like mine, which goes back to a period when the uniform inspiration of all portions of the Bible was practically unquestioned in the religious world.

Opinion glides along in the rapid evolution of our time, and we hardly realise how completely our views change within the course of a couple of generations. Fifty years ago *The Duty of Candour in Religious Teaching* would have shocked the sensibility of most educated persons, and would have seemed to be the work of what the seventeenth century called a "libertine," that is to say, a man for whom moral and religious responsibility had no existence. Yet it is written by a philosopher whose admirable book, *The Idea of God*, revealed a tender and pious conscience regulated by a reverent intellect. What Dr. Pringle-Pattison has to say on matters of such moment as the widening

and deepening of our attitude to Biblical study must be worthy of our grave attention.

The conviction of most people half a century ago may be summed up in words which were constantly repeated in my ears as a child. The Bible, in its English translation, was regarded, from Genesis to Malachi, from Matthew to Revelation, as dictated to its so-called authors, but more properly transcribers, by the Holy Ghost. It was definitely affirmed that not merely the doctrine, but the actual language, was Divine, incapable of error, superior to all the frailties which accompany human literature. " The words are as much the Spirit's as the ideas." It is difficult to credit, but it is the fact, that the Authorised Version of 1611 was very widely held to enjoy this immunity from criticism, as though, without any previous Greek or Hebrew text, the English of Lancelot Andrewes and his colleagues had descended upon them direct from heaven. When it was pointed out that the earlier translators, like Tyndale and Coverdale, had produced versions which differed from that of 1611, the reply was that these were imperfect, and that the Holy Ghost first spoke finally and fully in the Authorised Version.

Among the Evangelicals there were many who could not accept this illogical theory, and they went back to the ancient texts, finding the plenary inspiration there, and trying, by awkward literal translations of their own, to get still nearer to the Sacred Utterance. But all united in believing that God, as they said, had " employed human speech,"

and that revealed religion was contained in a single volume, written down at various times, but in all its parts preserving the same level and possessing the same literal value.

The earliest definite revolt against this theory of verbal inspiration was made by Robertson Smith in 1875. His famous article on the Bible was received with a howl of horror, and led, after a controversy of unexampled bitterness, to his expulsion from his chair of Biblical Exegesis in Aberdeen. We must not overlook the fact that what gave importance to the arguments of Robertson Smith was that they were not put forward by an outsider, but by an insider. Of course, deists and other pronounced types of infidel had long treated the canon of Scripture with hostility or derision. Two hundred years ago people like Toland and Matthew Tindal had declared "Christianity not mysterious" and had mocked at revelation. They, however, were in the bond of iniquity, and what they gabbled mattered nothing to the elect.

But Robertson Smith was elect himself; he started altogether a new idea, namely, that the language, "the human speech," was a finite thing, and that it was therefore no longer reasonable for those who held the inner fort of orthodoxy to exclude from their weapons of defence such historical and textual criticism of it as is universally applied to the structure of other books. The object of Robertson Smith and of those who supported him in his appeal for a "charter of critical freedom" was not to undermine or reject

revealed religion, but to strengthen it by insisting on the moral value of an honest search for truth.

We can very well understand the horror with which this proposition was received among orthodox bibliolaters. It was the steadying by mortal hands of an immortal mystery which was quite capable of supporting itself; it was the sin of Uzzah, who put forth his hand to hold the Ark of God, because the oxen shook it. The unwillingness of the rank and file of believers to accept the new conception, so far from confirming the mystical character of the Bible has weakened it. Mr. Gladstone, who was not averse to an occasional plunge into theology, spoke of "the corporeal perfection" of Scripture, and there were many, for a long time the majority of Christians, who protested that to question whether Moses' rod was turned into a real zoological serpent, or whether the walls of Jericho fell literally flat at the sevenfold blast of Joshua's trumpet, was to abandon everything which the Bible contained, not of history only, but of doctrine as well.

"Am I to believe that the Holy Ghost has set his seal to a lie, simply because phenomena are recorded of which my finite senses can render no explanation?" Thus have I heard the case put by one more formidable in argument than the Numidian lion. "Every jot and tittle of the revealed narrative, or nothing at all!"—such was the logical and daunting alternative. It followed that if we admitted the smallest criticism, there was nothing for it but to reject the Bible altogether, and to abandon the least attempt at its defence.

Dr. Pringle-Pattison faces the dilemma, and discovers a third course. The aim of his eloquent and persuasive plea is to reject what is no longer tenable, but with the express purpose of drawing closer to us and making a more precious part of our intellectual experience what is living and eternal. We are to admit all that careful criticism has alleged with regard to those portions of the Old Testament which are plainly transitory, that is to say, which bear upon their very face the evidence of human agency, and, in fact, of human error. We are to look upon the tribal legends of Genesis as recording the finite, but often pious and beautiful, speculations of men who, in the old phrase, "walked with God," who, in other words, endeavoured, by such light as the morning of the world vouchsafed them, to discover the Divine Purpose in life.

Above all we are to avoid what was the cardinal error of the bibliolaters, namely, their refusal to admit the bare possibility of progress in revelation. The Pentateuch, with all its fables and its folk-lore, was held to be as true in fact and detail, as completely unassailable on all points, as a very careful record of what happened in some English community yesterday would be. That God should have addressed to the infancy of man a message couched in exactly the same terms, and demanding the same experience as that addressed to a full maturity of the ages—this was the absurdity, and if we may say so, actually the impiety of the old theory of verbal inspiration.

The purpose of our philosopher, then, is to

commend the Bible to readers of our day, who have so widely abandoned the study of it on account of the chasm conventionality opens between common sense and formal tradition. There is much evidence that the English Scriptures are losing their hold on the attention of the Christian Churches. The Sacred Books are worn with routine, deadened with the familiarity of their use in combination with habits of hackneyed speech. It is not merely that an ever-increasing class is trained to be hostile to the Bible because of the outworn dogmas and " plans of salvation " which are founded upon it, but, as Dr. Pringle-Pattison ably points out, its acceptance as an inspired and complete revelation is more and more felt to be " in flagrant contradiction to the system of our best-established secular beliefs." His suggestion of a remedy is worthy of careful consideration :

" I believe," he says, " that it is the bounden duty, as well as the plain interest, of the Churches at the present time to undertake a campaign of instruction in regard to the Bible, and primarily in regard to the Old Testament. They should, through their most authoritative members, cut themselves loose in the plainest terms from the old doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy. Its manifest falsehood should be frankly and fearlessly expounded. . . . It is ridiculous to read that one of the recurring conundrums of religious debate in the trenches was the question, Who was Cain's wife ! . . . In my view the Church should do its

own rationalistic criticism, and thereby make its members immune against attacks conducted with such obsolete weapons."

These are courageous words, and without going into any question of theology, which is plainly not my province, I venture to urge in support of Dr. Pringle-Pattison that such action as he recommends would have an immediate effect in re-opening our eyes, which have become dulled to its fascination, to the marvellous beauty and vivacity of the Scripture narrative. It would make the Bible once again a living volume, a fountain of perennial interest. These " holy and ghostly books " would become once more what Cranmer wished them to be, " a better jewel in our house than either gold or silver."

No one wants " a new Bible " ; what is called for is a wise and sensible appreciation of that old one which has been the solace of mankind and the model of pure language for three hundred years. I know not when the practice of printing the Testaments in chapters, and still worse in verses, came into practice, nor what was its original object, though I suppose the latter to have been connected with ecclesiastical ritual. That it should be convenient so to divide the Psalms can easily be understood, but in the historical narratives it becomes a mere vexation, and has doubtless had a good deal to do with the neglect of those portions of the text. It has been remedied in Sir James Frazer's *Passages of the Bible Chosen for their*

Literary Brevity and Interest, than which I am acquainted with no more delightful bedside companion. This selection, taken implicitly from the Authorised Version, but arranged as literature without those distracting ritual divisions, should be in the hands of everyone who joins Dr. Pringle-Pattison in his campaign of instruction in regard to the true value of the English Bible.

CATS

CATS

LES CHATS. *A Rotterdam, chez Jean Daniel Beman, MDCCXXVIII.*

AN accomplished lady of my acquaintance tells me that she is preparing an anthology of the cat. This announcement has reminded me of one of the oddest and most entertaining volumes in my library. People who collect prints of the eighteenth century know an engraving which represents a tom-cat, rampant, holding up an oval portrait of a gentleman and standing, in order to do so, on a volume. The volume is *Les Chats*, the book before us, and the portrait is that of the author, the amiable and amusing Augustin Paradis de Moncrif. He was the son of English, or more probably of Scotch parents settled in Paris, where he was born in 1687. All we know of his earlier years is to be found in a single sparkling page of d'Alembert, who makes Moncrif float out of obscurity like the most elegant of iridescent bubbles. He was handsome and seductive, turned a copy of verses with the best of gentlemen, but was particularly distinguished by the art with which he purveyed little dramas for the amateur stage, then so much in fashion in France. Somebody said of him, when he was famous as the laureate of the cats, that he had risen in life by

never scratching, by always having velvet paws, and by never putting up his back, even when he was startled. Voltaire called him " my very dear Sylph," and he was the ideal of all that was noiseless, graceful, good-humoured, and well-bred. He slipped unobtrusively into the French Academy, and lived to be eighty-three, dying at last, like Anacreon, in the midst of music and dances and fair nymphs of the Opera, affecting to be a sad old rogue to the very last.

This book on Cats, the only one by which he is now remembered, was the sole production of his lifetime which cost him any annoyance. He was forty years of age when it appeared, and the subject was considered a little frivolous, even for such a *petit conteur* as Moncrif. People continued to tease him about it, and the only rough thing he ever did was the result of one such twitting. The poet Roy made an epigram about " cats " and " rats " in execrable taste, no doubt; this stung our Sylph to such an excess that he waited outside the Palais Royal and beat Roy with a stick when he came out. The poet was, perhaps, not much hurt; at all events, he had the presence of mind to retort, " Patte de velours, patte de velours, Minon-minet ! " It was six years after this that Moncrif was elected into the French Academy, and then the shower of epigrams broke out again. He wished to be made historiographer; " Oh, nonsense," the wits cried, " he must mean historiogriffe," and they invited him, on nights when the Academy met, to climb on to the roof

and miau from the chimney-pots. He had the weakness to apologise for his charming book, and to withdraw it from circulation. His pastoral tales and heroic ballets, his *Zélindors* and *Zéloïdes* and *Erosines*, which to us seem utterly vapid and frivolous, never gave him a moment's uneasiness. His crumpled rose-leaf was the book by which his name lives in literature.

The book of cats is written in the form of eleven letters to Madame la Marquise de B——. The anonymous author represents himself as too much excited to sleep, after an evening spent in a fashionable house, where the company was abusing cats. He was unsupported ; where was the Marquise, who would have brought a thousand arguments to his assistance, founded on her own experience of virtuous pussies ? Instead of going to bed he will sit up and indite the panegyric of the feline race. He is still sore at the prejudice and injustice of the people he has just left. It culminated in the conduct of a lady who declared that cats were poison, and who, " when pussy appeared in the room, had the presence of mind to faint." These people had rallied him on the absurdity of his enthusiasm ; but, as he says, the Marquise well knows, " how many women have a passion for cats, and how many men are women in this respect."

So he starts away on his dissertation, with all its elegant pedantry, its paradoxical wit, its genuine touches of observation and its constant sparkle of anecdote. He is troubled to account

for the existence of the cat. An Ottoman legend relates that when the animals were in the Ark, Noah gave the lion a great box on the ear, which made him sneeze, and produce a cat out his nose. But the author questions this origin, and is more inclined to agree with a Turkish Minister of Religion, sometime Ambassador to France, that the ape, " weary of a sedentary life " in the Ark, paid his attentions to a very agreeable young lioness, whose infidelities resulted in the birth of a Tom-cat and a Puss-cat, and that these, combining the qualities of their parents, spread through the Ark *un esprit de coquetterie*—which lasted during the whole of the sojourn there. Moncrif has no difficulty in showing that the East has always been devoted to cats, and he tells the story of Mahomet, who, being consulted one day on a point of piety, preferred to cut off his sleeve, on which his favourite pussy was asleep, rather than wake her violently by rising.

From the French poets, Moncrif collects a good many curious tributes to the " harmless, necessary cat." I am seized with an ambition to put some fragments of these into English verse. Most of them are highly complimentary. It is true that Ronsard was one of those who could not appreciate a " matou." He sang or said :

> There is no man now living anywhere
> Who hates cats with a deeper hate than I ;
> I hate their eyes, their heads, the way they stare,
> And when I see one come, I turn and fly.

But among the *précieuses* of the seventeenth

century there was much more appreciation. Mme. Deshoulières wrote a whole series of songs and couplets about her cat, Grisette. In a letter to her husband, referring to the attentions she herself receives from admirers, she adds :

> Deshoulières cares not for the smart
> Her bright eyes cause, disdainful hussy,
> But, like a mouse, her idle heart
> Is captured by a pussy.

Much better than these is the sonnet on the cat of the Duchess of Lesdiguières, with its admirable line :

> Chatte pour tout le monde, et pour les chats tigresse.

A fugitive epistle by Scarron, delightfully turned, is too long to be quoted here, nor can I pause to cite the rondeau which the Duchess of Maine addressed to her favourite. But she supplemented it as follows :

> My pretty puss, my solace and delight,
> To celebrate thy loveliness aright
> I ought to call to life the bard who sung
> Of Lesbia's sparrow with so sweet a tongue ;
> But 'tis in vain to summon here to me
> So famous a dead personage as he,
> And you must take contentedly to-day
> This poor rondeau that Cupid wafts your way.

When this cat died the Duchess was too much affected to write its epitaph herself, and accordingly it was done for her, in the following style, by La Mothe le Vayer, the author of the *Dialogues* :

Puss passer-by, within this simple tomb
  Lies one whose life fell Atropos hath shred ;
The happiest cat on earth hath heard her doom,
  And sleeps for ever in a marble bed.
Alas ! what long delicious days I've seen !
  O cats of Egypt, my illustrious sires,
You who on altars, bound with garlands green,
  Have melted hearts, and kindled fond desires,—
Hymns in your praise were paid, and offerings too,
  But I'm not jealous of those rights divine.
Since Ludovisa loved me, close and true,
  Your ancient glory was less proud than mine.
To live a simple pussy by her side
Was nobler far than to be deified.

To these and other tributes Moncrif adds idyls and romances of his own, while regretting that it never occurred to Theocritus to write a *bergerie de chats*. He tells stories of blameless pussies beloved by Fontanelle and La Fontaine, and quotes Marot in praise of "the green-eyed Venus." But he tears himself away at last from all these historical reminiscences, and in his eleventh letter he deals with cats as they are. We hasten as lightly as possible over a story of the disinterestedness of a feline Héloïse, which is too pathetic for a nineteenth-century ear. But we may repeat the touching anecdote of Bayle's friend, Mlle. Dupuy. This lady excelled to a surprising degree in playing the harp, and she attributed her excellence in this accomplishment to her cat, whose critical taste was only equalled by his close attention to Mlle. Dupuy's performance. She felt that she owed so much to this cat, under whose care her reputation for skill on the harp had become universal, that

when she died she left him, in her will, one agreeable house in town and another in the country. To this bequest she added a revenue sufficient to supply all the requirements of a well-bred tom-cat, and at the same time she left pensions to certain persons whose duty it should be to wait upon him. Her ignoble family contested the will, and there was a long suit. Moncrif gives a handsome double-plate illustration of this incident. Mlle. Dupuy, sadly wasted by illness, is seen in bed, with her cat in her arms, dictating her will to the family lawyer in a periwig; her physician is also present.

This leads me to speak of the illustrations to *Les Chats*, which greatly add to its value. They were engraved by Otten from original drawings by Coypel. In another edition the same drawings are engraved by Count Caylus. Some of them are of a charming absurdity. One, a double plate, represents a tragedy acted by cats on the roof of a fashionable house. The actors are tricked out in the most magnificent feathers and furbelows, but the audience consists of common cats. Cupid sits above, with his bow and fluttering wings. Another plate shows the mausoleum of the Duchess of Lesdiguières' cat, with a marble pussy of heroic size, upon a marble pillow, in a grove of poplars. Another is a medal to "Chat Noir premier, né en 1725," with the proud inscription, "Knowing to whom I belong, I am aware of my value." The profile within is that of as haughty a tom as ever shook out his whiskers in a lady's boudoir.

AN ELECTION AT THE ENGLISH ACADEMY

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ATHENÆUM CLUB, PALL MALL, S.W.

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, R.E.A., Samoa.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON—Last night I think that even you must have regretted being a beach-comber. Even the society of your friend Ori-a-Ori and the delights of kava and bread-fruit can hardly make up to you for what you lost in Piccadilly. It was the first occasion, as you are aware, upon which we have been called upon to fill up a vacancy in the Forty. You know, long before this letter reaches you, that we have already lost one of our original members. Poor Kinglake! I thought at the time that it was a barren honour, but it was one which his fame imperatively demanded. I can't say I knew him: a single introduction, a few gracious words in a low voice, a grave and sad presence—that is all I retain of him personally. I shall know more when our new Academician has to deliver the eulogium on his predecessor. What an intellectual treat it will be!

We had a splendid gathering. Do you recollect that when the papers discussed us, before our foundation, one thing they said was that there

never would be a decent attendance? I mus confess our business meetings have been rathe sparsely filled up. Besant is invariably there Lecky generally, a few others. There has alway been a quorum—not much more. But betwee you and me and those other palms—the feathe palms of your cabin—there has not been muc business to transact; not much more than migh have been left to assiduous Mr. Robinson, ou paid secretary. But last night the clan was a but complete. There were thirty-seven of us nobody missing but Mr. Ruskin and yourself Ruskin, by the way, wrote a letter to be read at th meeting, and then sent on to the *Pall Mal Gazette*—so diverting! I must cut it out an enclose it. But his style, if this is to be taken a an example, is not quite what it was.[1]

[1] My dear Sir—What in the Devil's name should I do a your assemblage of notorieties? I neither care nor wish to ca whom you elect. The only *Gardiner* I ever heard of was Henry Bloody Bishop. If "Kiss me *Hardy*" came before us, it woul be worth while for the only true Tory left in England to vote fo him; but he has been with God this good half century. M £100 a year as Academician—recoverable, they tell me, in case o lapsed payment, from Her Majesty herself—I spend in perfectin my collection of the palates of molluscs, who keep their inwar economy as clean as the deck of a ship of the line with stratagem beautiful and manifold exceedingly. Few of your Academician show an apparatus half so handsome when they open their mouth How unlike am I, by the way, in my retirement, from Bismarc across the waters, who squeaks like a puppy-dog on his road t the final parliamentary sausage-making machine of these poo times. Would it not be well for your English Academy, instea of these election follies, to bestir itself with a copy of *The Crow of Wild Olive* for his heart's betterment? But keep your Lydia modes; I hold my Dorian.—Ever faithfully yours, John Ruskin.

Well, I am still so excited that I hardly know where to begin. To me, a real country bumpkin, the whole thing was such an occasion! Such a *social* occasion! I must begin from the beginning. I came all the way up from Luxilian, my green uniform, with the golden palm-shoots embroidered on it, safely packed in my portmanteau under my dress-clothes. To my great annoyance the children had been wearing it in Christmas charades. My dear wife, ay me, has so little firmness of character. By-the-by, I hope you wear yours on official occasions in Samoa? The whole costume, I should fancy, must be quite in a Polynesian taste. I was more "up" in the candidates and their characteristics than you would expect. Ah! I know you think me rather a Philistine—but can an Academician be a Philistine? That is a question that might be started when next the big gooseberry season begins. I was "up" in the candidates because, as good luck would have it, Sala had been spending a week with me in the country. Delightful companion, but scarcely fitted for rural pleasures. He mentioned such a great number of eminent literary persons whom I had never heard of—mostly rather occasional writers, I gathered. He has an extraordinarily wide circle, I find: it makes me feel quite the Country Mouse. He did not seem to know much about Gardiner, it is true, but then he could tell me all that Hardy had written—or pretty nearly all; and, of course, as you know, Gardiner is my own hobby.

The moment I got to Paddington I foolishly began looking hither and thither for fellow-"immortals." Rather absurd, but not so absurd as you might suppose, for there, daintily stepping out of a first-class carriage, whom should I see but Max Müller. I scarcely know him, and should not have ventured to address him, but he called out: "Ah! my dear friend, we come, I suspect, on the same interesting, the same patriotic errand!" I had felt a few qualms of conscience about my own excitement in the election; we are so quiet at Luxilian that we can scarcely measure the relative importance of events. But Max Müller completely reassured me. It was delightful to me to see how seriously he regarded the event. "Europe," he said, "is not inattentive to such a voice as the unanimity of the English Academy may—may wield." I could not help smiling at the last word, and reflecting how carelessly the most careful of us professional writers expresses himself in conversation. But his enthusiasm was very beautiful, and I found myself more elevated than ever. "It is permitted to us," he went on, "to whisper among ourselves what the world must not hear—the unthinking world—that the social status of English Academician adds not a little dignity to literature. One hopes that, whoever may be added to our number to-night, the social——eh?" I had formulated just the same feeling myself. "Only in so far," he went on, "as is strictly consistent with the interests of literature and scholarship—of course? Good

bye!" and he left me with an impression that he wanted to vote for both candidates.

There was a little shopping I had to do in Regent Street, after I had left my costume at the Academy, and I called in at Mudie's for a moment on my way to the British Museum. To give you an idea of the mental disturbance I was suffering from, I asked the very polite young man at the counter for my own *Mayors of Woodshire*—you know, my seventeenth-century book—instead of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, which my wife wanted to read. I did not realise my mistake till I saw the imprint of the Clarendon Press. At last I got to the manuscript room, made my references, and found that our early dinner hour was approaching. I walked westward down Oxford Street, enjoying the animation and colour of the lovely evening, and then, suddenly, realising what the hour was, turned and took a hansom to the Athenæum.

Who should meet me in the vestibule but Seeley? Less and less often do I find my way to Cambridge, and I hesitated about addressing him, although I used to know him so well. He was buried in a reverie, and slowly moving to the steps. I suppose I involuntarily slackened my speed also, and he looked up. He was most cordial, and almost immediately began to talk to me about those notes on the commercial relations of the Woodshire ports with Poland which I printed in the *English Historical* two (or perhaps three) years ago. I daresay you never heard of them. I promised to send him some transcripts

I have since made of the harbour laws of Luxilian itself—most important. I longed to ask Seeley whether we might be sure of his support for Gardiner, but I hardly liked to do so, he seemed so much more absorbed in the past. I took for granted it was all right, and when we parted, as he left the Club, he said, "We meet later on this evening, I suppose?" and that was his only reference to the election.

I am hardly at home yet at the Athenæum, and I was therefore delighted to put myself under Lecky's wing. I soon saw that quite a muster of Academicians was preparing to dine, for when we entered the Coffee Room we found Mr. Walter Besant already seated, and before we could join him Mr. Black and Mr. Herbert Spencer came in together and approached us. We had two small tables placed together, and just as we were sitting down, Lord Lytton, who was so extremely kind to me in Paris last autumn when I left my umbrella in the Eiffel Tower, made his appearance. We all seemed studiously to make no reference, at first, to the great event of the day, while Mr. Spencer diverted us with several anecdotes which he had just brought from a family in the country—not at all, of course, of a puerile description, but throwing a singular light upon the development of infant mind. After this the conversation flagged a little. I suppose we were all thinking of the same thing. I was quite relieved when a remark of Lecky's introduced the general topic.

Our discussion began by Lord Lytton's giving

us some very interesting particulars of the election of Pierre Loti (M. Viaud) into the French Academy last week, and of the social impression produced by these contests. I had no idea of the pushing, the intriguing, the unworthy anxiety which are shown by some people in Paris who wish to be of the Forty. Lord Lytton says that there is a story by M. Daudet which, although it is petulant and exaggerated, gives a very graphic picture of the seamy side of the French Academy. I must read this novel, for I feel that we, as a new body destined to wield a vast influence in this country, ought to be forewarned. I ventured to say that I did not think that English people, with our honest and wholesome traditions, and the blessings of a Protestant religion, would be in any danger of falling into these excesses. Nobody responded to this ; I am afraid the London writers are dreadfully cynical, and Black remarked that we six, at all events, were poachers turned inside out. They laughed at this, and I was quite glad when the subject was changed.

Lord Lytton asked Mr. Besant whether he was still as eager as ever about his Club of Authors, or whether he considered that the English Academy covered the ground. He replied that he had wholly relinquished that project for the present. His only wish had been to advocate union among authors, on a basis of mutual esteem and encouragement, and he thought that the Academy would be quite enough to do that, if it secured for itself the building which is now being talked about,

as a central point for consultation on all matters connected with the literary life and profession. But this notion did not seem to commend itself to Mr. Spencer, who said that it seemed to him that the Forty were precisely those whom success or the indulgence of the public had raised above the need or the desire of consultation. "I am very glad to have the pleasure of playing a game of billiards with you, Mr. Besant, but why should I consult you about my writings? I conceive that the duty of our Academy is solely to insist on a public recognition of the dignity of literature, and that if we go a step beyond that aim, we prepare nothing but snares for our feet."

"Whom, then, do you propose," continued Lecky to Besant, "to summon to your consultations?"

"Surely," was the reply, "any respectable authors."

"Outsiders, then," said Mr. Spencer, "a few possible and a multitude of impossible candidates?"

"Female writers as well as male?" asked Black; "are we to have the literary Daphne at our conversaziones—

> "With legs toss'd high on her sophee she sits,
> Vouchsafing audience to contending wits?

How do you like that prospect, Lecky?"

"But poorly, I must confess. We have tiresome institutions enough in London without adding to them a sort of Ptolemaic Mouseion, for us to stru

about on the steps of, in our palm-costume, attended by dialectical ladies and troops of intriguing pupils. Though that, I am sure," he added courteously, " is the last thing our friend Besant desires, yet I conceive it would tend to be the result of such consultation."

" What, then," said the novelist, " is to be the practical service of the English Academy to life and literature ? "

At this we all put on a grave and yet animated expression, for certainly, to each of us, this was a very important consideration.

" Putting on one side," began Mr. Spencer, " the social advantage, the unquestionable dignity and importance given to individual literary accomplishment at a time when the purer parts of writing—I mean no disrespect to you novelists—are greatly neglected in the general hurly-burly ; putting on one side this function of the English Academy, there remains, of course——"

But, at this precise moment, when I was literally hanging on the lips of our eminent philosopher, the door opened with a considerable noise of gaiety, and Mr. Arthur Balfour entered, in company with a gentleman, who was introduced to me presently as Mr. Andrew Lang.

" Two more Academicians, and this time neither novelists nor philosophers," said Black.

They sat down close to us, so that the conversation was still general.

" We were discussing the Academy," said Lord Lytton.

"And we," replied Mr. Balfour, "were comparing notes about rackets. Lang tells me he has found a complete description of the game in one of the Icelandic sagas."

"Played with a shuttlecock," said Mr. Lang, throwing himself back with a gesture of intense fatigue. "By the way, when we get to B in our Academy dictionary, I will write the article *battledore*. It is Provençal, I believe; but one must look up Skeat."

"We shall be very old, I am afraid, before we reach letter B," I remarked, "shall we not?"

"Oh! no," said Mr. Lang, "we shall fire away like fun. All we have to do is to crib our definitions out of Murray."

"I hardly think that," said Mr. Besant; "we seem to have precious little to occupy ourselves with, but our dictionary at least you must leave us."

We talked this over a little, and the general opinion seemed to be that it would turn out to be more an alphabetical series of monographs on the history of our language than a dictionary in the ordinary sense. And who was to have the courage to start it, no one seemed able to guess.

A general conversation then began, which was of not a little interest to me. The merits of our two candidates were warmly, but temperately discussed. Everybody seemed to feel that we ought to have them both among us; that our company would still be incomplete if one was elected. Black suggested that some public-spirited Academician should perform the Happy Despatch, so

as to supply the convenience of two vacancies. Lord Lytton reminded us that we were doing, on a small scale, what the French Academy itself did for a few years,—from the election of Guizot to that of Labiche—namely, meeting in private to wrangle over the merits of the candidates. We laughed, and set to with greater zeal, I painting Gardiner in rosier colours as Besant advanced the genius of Hardy.

While this was going on Sir Frederick Leighton joined us, listening and leaning in one of his Olympian attitudes. "I find," he said at last, "that I am able to surprise you. You are not aware that there is a third candidate." "A third candidate?" we all exclaimed. "Yes," he said; "before the hour was too far advanced yesterday, our secretary received the due notice from his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury." "Ah! you mean for your own Academy," some one said; "as chaplain in the room of the poor Archbishop of York?" "No," Sir Frederick answered, smiling, "as a candidate for *our* Academy, the English Academy." (And, indeed, I recollected that Leighton was one of our original members. I cannot quite recall upon what literary grounds, but he is a charming person, and a great social acquisition.)

There was a pause at this unexpected announcement. "I am sorry," said Mr. Balfour at last, "that the Archbishop, whom I greatly esteem and admire, should have laid himself open to this rebuff. We cannot admit him, and yet how

extremely painful to reject him. He has scarcely more claim to belong to this Academy than I have, and——" At this we all, very sincerely, murmured our expostulation, and Lord Lytton, leaning across, said: "My dear Arthur, you are our Haussonville!" "I am afraid I am more likely," he replied, "to be your Audriffet-Pasquier. But here I am, and it was none of my seeking. I am, at least, determined not to use what fortieth-power I have for the election of any but the best purely literary candidates." There was no direct reply to this, and presently we all got up and separated to prepare for the election, each of us manifestly disturbed by this unexpected news.

As I was going out of the Club, I met Jebb, whom I was very glad to greet. I used to know him well, but I go so seldom to Cambridge in these days that I can scarcely have seen him since he took his doctor's degree in letters, which must be seven or eight years ago, when I came up to see my own boy get his B.A. He was quite unchanged, and as cordial as ever. The night was so clear that we decided to walk, and, as we passed into Pall Mall, the moonlight suddenly flooded the street.

"How the nightingales must be singing at Luxilian," I cried.

"And that nest of singing-birds with whom I saw you dining," said Jebb, "how did they entertain you?"

"The best company in the world," I replied; "and yet——! Perhaps Academicians talk better in twos and ones than *en masse*. I thought the

dinner might have been more brilliant, and it certainly might have been more instructive."

"They were afraid of one another, no doubt," said the Professor; "they were afraid of you. But how could it have been more instructive?"

"I was in hopes that I should hear from all these accomplished men something definite about the aims of the Academy, its functions in practical life—what the use of it is to be, in fact."

"Had they no ideas to exchange on that subject? Did they not dwell on the social advantages it gives to literature? Why, my dear friend, between ourselves, the election of a new member to an Academy constituted as ours is, so restricted in numbers, so carefully weeded of all questionable elements, is in itself the highest distinction ever yet placed within the reach of English literature. In fact, it is the Garter."

"But," I pursued, "are we not in danger of thinking too much of the social matter? Are we not framing a tradition which, if it had existed for three hundred years, would have excluded Defoe, Bunyan, Keats, and perhaps Shakespeare himself?"

"Doubtless," Jebb answered, "but we are protected against such folly by the high standard of our candidates. Hardy, Gardiner—who could be more unexceptionable? who could more eminently combine the qualities we seek?"

"You are not aware, then," I said, "that a third candidate is before us?"

"No! Who?"

"The Archbishop of Canterbury."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, and we walked on together in silence.

At the door of the Academy Jebb left me, "for a moment or two," he said, and proceeded up Piccadilly. I ascended the steps of our new building, and passed into the robing-room. Whom should I meet there, putting on his green palm-shoots, but Mr. Leslie Stephen. I was particularly glad to have a moment's interview with him, for I wanted to tell him of my great discovery, a fifth Nicodemus, Abbot of Luxilian, in the twelfth century. Extraordinary thing! Of course, I imagined that he would be delighted about it, although he has not quite reached N yet, but I can't say that he seemed exhilarated. "Five successive Nicodemuses," I said, "what do you think of that?" He murmured something about "all standing naked in the open air." I fancy he is losing his interest in the mediæval biographies. However, before I could impress upon him what a "find" it is, Mr. Gladstone came in with the Bishop of Oxford, and just then Sala called me out to repeat a story to me which he had just heard at some club. I thought it good at the time—something about "Manipur" and "many poor"—but I have forgotten how it went.

Upstairs, in the great reception-room, the company was now rapidly gathering. You may imagine how interesting I found it. Everywhere knots of men were forming, less, I felt, to discuss the relative claims of Hardy and Gardiner than to

deplore the descent of the Archbishop into the lists. The Duke of Argyll, who courteously recognised me, deigned to refer to this topic of universal interest. "I would have done much," he said, "to protect him from the annoyance of this defeat. A prince of the Anglican Church, whom we all respect and admire! I fear he will not have more than—than—perhaps *one* vote. Alas! alas!"

Various little incidents caught my eye. Poor Professor Freeman, bursting very hastily into the room, bounced violently against Mr. Froude, who happened to be standing near the door. I don't think Mr. Freeman can have realised how roughly he struck him, for he did not turn or stop, but rushed across the room to the Bishop of Oxford, with whom he was soon in deep consultation about Gardiner, no doubt; I did not disturb them. Lord Salisbury, with pendant arms, gently majestic, stood on the hearth-rug talking to an elderly gentleman of pleasing aspect, in spectacles. I heard some one say something about "the other uncrowned king of Brentford," but I did not understand the allusion. I suppose the gentleman was some supporter of the Ministry, but I did not catch his name.

Lecky was so kind as to present me to Professors Huxley and Tyndall, neither of whom, I believe, ought to have been out on so fresh a spring night; neither, I hope to hear this evening, is the worse for such imprudence. A curious incident now occurred, for as we were chatting, Huxley

suddenly said, in a low voice : " Gladstone has his eye upon you, Tyndall." The professor flounced about at this in a great agitation, and replied, so loudly that I feared it would be generally heard : " He had better not attempt to address me. I should utter six withering syllables, and then turn my back upon him. Gladstone, indeed, the old ——" But at this moment, to my horror, Mr. Gladstone glided across the floor with his most courtly and dignified air, and held out his hand. " Ah ! Professor Tyndall, how long it seems since those beautiful days on the Bel Alp." There was a little bridling and hesitating, and then Tyndall took the proffered hand. " I was wandering," said the Grand Old Man, " without a guide, and now I have found one, the best possible. I am ——" " Oh ! " broke in the professor, " I thought it would be so. I am more delighted than——" " Pardon me," interrupted Mr. Gladstone with an exquisite deprecation, " I am mainly interested at the moment in the Sirens. I am lost, as I said, without a guide, and I have found one. Your experiments with the sirens on the North Foreland—

ἱεῖσαι ὅπα κάλλιμον,—"

and then, arm in arm, the amicable and animated pair retired to a corner of the room.

Impossible to describe to you all the incidents of this delightful gathering. In one corner the veteran Dr. Martineau was seated, conversing with Mr. Henry Irving. I was about to join them

when I was attracted by a sharp and elastic step on the stairs, and saw that Lord Wolseley, entering the room, and glancing quickly round, walked straight to a group at my left hand, which was formed around Mr. George Meredith.

"For whom must I vote, Mr. Meredith?" he said. "I place myself in your hands. Is it to be the Archbishop of Canterbury?"

"Nay," replied Mr. Meredith, smiling, "for the prelate I shake you out a positive negative. The customary guests at our academic feast—well; poet, historian, essayist, say novelist or journalist, all welcome on grounds of merit royally acknowledged and distinguished. But this portent of a crozier, nodding familiarly to us with its floriated tin summit, a gilt commodity, definitely hostile to literature—never in the world. How Europe will boom with cachinnation when it learns that we have invented the Academy of English Letters for the more excellent glorification of mere material episcopacy, a radiant excess of iridescence thrown by poetry upon prelacy, heart's blood of books shed merely to stain more rosily the *infulæ* and *vittæ* of a mitre. I shall be tempted into some colloquial extravagance if I dwell on this theme, however; I must chisel on Blackmore yonder for floral wit, and so will, with permission, float out of your orbit by a bowshot."

Dr. Jowett now made his appearance, in company with Mr. Swinburne; and they were followed by a gentleman in a rough coat and picturesque blue shirt, who attracted my attention by this odd

costume, and by his very fine head, with flowing beard and hair. I was told it was the poet Morris ; not at all how I had pictured the author of *The Epic of Hades*. And finally, to our infinite delight, Lord Tennyson himself came in, leaning on Jebb's arm, and we felt that our company was complete.

We clustered at last into our inner council-room, at the door of which the usher makes us sign our names. What a page last night's will be for the enjoyment of posterity ! We gradually settled into our places ; Lord Tennyson in his presidential chair, Lecky in his post of permanent secretary ; our excellent paid secretary hurrying about with papers, and explaining to us the routine. It seemed more like a club than ever at that moment, our charming Academy, with the best of all possible society. As I sat waiting for business to begin, my thoughts ran more and more upon the unfortunate candidature of the Archbishop. I reflected on what the Duke of Argyll had said, the wretchedness of the *one* vote. He should, at least, have two, I determined ; and I asked my neighbour, Mr. Frederic Harrison, if he knew what Dr. Benson had published. " I have an idea," he replied, " that he is the author of a work entitled *The Cathedral : its Necessary Place in the Life and Work of an Academy*."

Our proceedings were interrupted for a moment by the entrance of Cardinal Manning, who desired to be permitted, before the election began, to add to the names of the candidates that of Mr. W. T.

Stead. At this there was a general murmur, and Mr. Lang muttered: "If it comes to that, I propose Bridge" (or "Brydges"—I could not catch the name). The Cardinal continued: "I know I have a seconder for him in my eminent friend opposite." We all looked across at Archdeacon Farrar, who objected, with considerable embarrassment: "No, no; when I said that, I did not understand what the final list of candidates was to be. I must really decline." The Cardinal then turned to Mr. John Morley, who shook his head. "The Academy will have more need of Mr. Stead ten years hence, perhaps, than it has now." And with that the incident terminated.

The moment had at last arrived, and we expected a prolonged session. By a system of successive ballotings, we have to work on until one candidate has a positive majority; this may take a long time, and may even fail to be accomplished. The President rang his bell, and the names were pronounced by the secretary:

EDWARD WHITE BENSON, Archbishop of Canterbury,
SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER, and
THOMAS HARDY.

As soon as he had recorded his vote, our venerable President left us; the remainder of the company awaited the result with eager curiosity. The general opinion seemed to be that the votes for Gardiner and Hardy would prove pretty equal, and I began to feel a little qualm at having thrown

mine away. But when Mr. Gladstone, taking the President's chair, rang his bell, and announced the result of the voting, it is not too much to say that we were stupefied. The votes were thus divided :

The Archbishop of Canterbury .	19
Gardiner	8
Hardy	7
Blank votes	3

There was, accordingly, no need for a second ballot, since the Archbishop had secured a positive majority of the votes. I felt a little uncomfortable when I reflected that my vote, if loyally given to Gardiner, would have necessitated a reopening of the matter. Never mind. Better as it is. The election is a very good one, from a social point of view particularly.

The company dispersed rather hurriedly. On the stairs, where Mr. Arthur Balfour was offering his arm to Lord Selborne, I heard the latter say, " We may congratulate ourselves on a most excellent evening's work, may we not ? " Mr. Balfour shook his head, but I did not catch his reply ; he seemed to have lost something of his previous good spirits.

This morning the daily papers are in raptures, the Gladstonians as much as the Unionists. A great honour, they all say, done to the profession of literature. " Quite a social triumph," the *Morning Post* remarks ; " a bloodless victory in the campaign of letters "—rather happy, is it not ?

But one of those young men of the *National Observer*, who was waiting for me outside the Academy last night, and kindly volunteered to see me home to the hotel—where he was even good enough to partake of refreshment—was rather severe. "Not a single *writer* in the d——d gang of you," he said. A little coarse, I thought; and not positively final, as criticism.

I am,

Yours very faithfully,

1891.

MADEMOISELLE AÏSSÉ

MADEMOISELLE AÏSSÉ

LITERATURE presents us with no more pathetic figure of a waif or stray than that of the poor little Circassian slave whom her friends called Mademoiselle Aïssé. But interesting and touching as is the romance of her history, it is surpassed by the rare distinction of her character and the delicacy of her mind. Placed in the centre of the most depraved society of modern Europe, protected from ruin by none of those common bulwarks which proved too frail to sustain the high-born virtues of the Tencins and the Parabères, exposed by her wit and beauty to all the treachery of fashionable Paris unabashed, this little Oriental orphan preserved an exquisite refinement of nature, a conscience as sensitive as a nerve. If she had been *dévote*, if she had retired to a nunnery, the lesson of her life would have been less wholesome than it is ; we may go further and admit that it would be less poignant than it is but for the single frailty of her conduct. She sinned once, and expiated her sin with tears ; but in an age when love was reduced to a caprice and intrigue governed by cynical maxims, Aïssé's fault, her solitary abandonment to a sincere passion, almost takes the proportions of a virtue. Ruskin has somewhere recommended Swiss travellers who find themselves physically exhausted by the pomp of

Alpine landscape, to sink on their knees and concentrate their attention on the petals of a rock-rose. In comparison with the vast expanse of French literature the pretensions of Aïssé are little more than those of a flower, but she has no small share of a flower's perfume and beauty.

In her lifetime Mademoiselle Aïssé associated with some of the great writers of her time. Yet if anyone had told her that she would live in literature with such friends as Montesquieu and Destouches her modesty would have been overwhelmed with confusion. She made no pretensions to being a blue-stocking ; she would have told us that she did not know how to write a page. An exact coeval of hers was the sarcastic and brilliant young man who called himself Voltaire ; he was strangely gentle to Aïssé, but she would have been amazed to learn that he would long survive her, and would annotate her works in his old age. Her works ! Her only works, she would have told us, were the coloured embroideries with which, in some tradition of a Turkish taste, she adorned her own rooms in the Hôtel Ferriol. Notwithstanding all this, no history of French literature would have any pretensions to completeness if it omitted Aïssé's name. Among all the memoir-writers, letter-writers, and pamphleteers of the early eighteenth century she stands in some respects pre-eminent. As a correspondent pure and simple there is a significance in the fact that her life exactly fills the space between the death of Sévigné, which occurred when Aïssé was about

two years old, and the birth of L'Espinasse, which happened a few months before Aïssé's death. During this period of nearly forty years no woman in France wrote letters which could be placed beside theirs except our Circassian. They form a singularly interesting trio ; and if Aïssé can no more pretend to possess the breadth of vision and rich imagination of Madame de Sévigné than to command the incomparable accent of passion which cries through the correspondence of Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse, she has qualities which are not unworthy to be named with these—an exquisite sincerity, an observation of men and things which could hardly be more picturesque, a note of pensive and thrilling tenderness, and a candour which melts the very soul to pity.

In the winter of 1697 or spring of 1698, a dissipated and eccentric old bachelor, Charles de Ferriol, Baron d'Argental, who was French Envoy at the court of the Grand Vizier, bought a little Circassian child of about four years old in one of the bazaars of Constantinople. He had often bought slaves in the Turkish market before, and not to the honour of his memory. But this time he was actuated by a genuine kindly impulse. He was fifty-one years of age ; he did not intend to marry, and he seems to have thought that he would supply himself with a beautiful daughter for the care of his old age. Sainte-Beuve, with his unfailing intuition, insisted on this interpretation, and since his essay was written, in 1846, various documents have turned up, proving beyond a

doubt that the intentions of the Envoy were parental. The little girl said that her name was Haidée. She preserved in later life an impression of a large house, and many servants running hither and thither. Her friends agreed to consider her as the daughter of a Circassian prince, and the very large price (1500 livres) which M. de Ferriol paid for her, as well as the singular distinction of her beauty, to some extent support the legend. In August 1698, M. de Ferriol, who had held temporary missions in Turkey for seven years, was recalled to France, to be sent out again as French Ambassador to the Porte in 1699. He brought his little Circassian orphan with him, and placed her in the charge of his sister-in-law, Madame de Ferriol, in Paris. She was immediately christened as Charlotte Haidée, but she preserved neither of these names in ordinary life; Charlotte was dropped at once, and Haidée on the lips of her new French relations became the softer Aïssé.

Aïssé's adopted aunt, as we may call her, Madame de Ferriol, was a very fair average specimen of the fashionable lady of the Regency. She belonged to the notorious family of Tencin, whose mark on the early part of the eighteenth century is so ineffaceable. Of Madame de Ferriol it may be said by her defenders that she was not so openly scandalous as her sister the Canoness, who appears in a very curious light in the letters of Aïssé. Born in 1674, Madame de Ferriol was still quite a young woman, and her sons, the Marquis de

Pont-de-Veyle and Comte d'Argental, were little children, fit to become the playmates of Aïssé. Indeed these two boys were regarded almost as the Circassian's brothers, and the family documents speak of all three as " nos enfants." She was put to school—it is believed, from a phrase of her own, " Je viens de me ressouvenir "—with the Nouvelles Catholiques, a community of nuns, whose house was a few doors away from the Hôtel Ferriol, and there for a few years we may suppose her to have passed the happy life of a child. From this life she herself, in one of the most charming of her letters, draws aside the curtain for a moment. In 1731 some gossip accused her of a passion for the Duc de Gesvres, and her jealous mentor in Geneva wrote to know if there was any truth in the report. Aïssé, then about thirty-seven years of age, wrote back as follows :

" I admit, Madame, notwithstanding your anger and the respect which I owe you, that I have had a violent fancy for M. le Duc de Gesvres, and that I even carried this great sin to confession. It is true that my confessor did not think it necessary to impose any penance on me. I was eight years old when this passion began, and at twelve I laughed at the whole affair, not that I did not still like M. de Gesvres, but that I saw how ludicrous it had been of me to be so anxious to be talking and playing in the garden with him and his brothers He was two or three years older than I, and we thought ourselves a great deal more grown up than the rest. We liked to be conversing while the

others were playing at hide-and-seek. We set up for reasonable people; we met regularly every day: we never talked about love, for the fact was that neither of us knew what that meant. The window of the little drawing-room opened upon a balcony, where he often came; we made signs to each other; he took us out to see the fireworks, and often to Saint-Ouen. As we were always together, the people in charge of us began to joke about us and it came to the ears of my aga (the Ambassador), who, as you can imagine, made a fine romance out of all this. I found it out; it distressed me; I thought that, as a discreet person, I ought to watch my own behaviour, and the result was that I persuaded myself that I must really be in love with M. de Gesvres. I was *dévote*, and went to confession; I first mentioned all my little sins, and then I had to mention this big sin; I could scarcely make up my mind to do so, but as a girl that had been well brought up, I determined to hide nothing. I confessed that I was in love with a young man. My director seemed astonished; he asked me how old he was. I told him he was eleven. He laughed, and told me that there was no penance for that sin; that I had only to keep on being a good girl, and that he had nothing more to say to me for the time being."

It is like a page of Hans Andersen; there is the same innocence, the same suspicion that all the world may not be so innocent.

The incidents of the early womanhood of Aïssé are known to us only through an anonymous sketch

of her life, printed in 1787, when her *Letters* first appeared. This short life, which has been attributed to Mademoiselle Rieu, the granddaughter of the lady to whom the letters were addressed, informs us that Aïssé was carefully educated, so far as the head went, but more than neglected in the lessons of the heart. "From the moment when Mademoiselle Aïssé began to lisp," says this rather pedantic memoir, "she heard none but dangerous maxims. Surrounded by voluptuous and intriguing women, she was constantly being reminded that the only occupation of a woman without a fortune ought to be to secure one." But she found protectors. The two sons of Madame de Ferriol, though themselves no better than their neighbours, guarded her as though she had really been their sister; and in her own soul there were no germs of the fashionable depravity. When she was seventeen, her "aga" came back from his long exile in Constantinople, broken in health, even, it is said, more than a little disturbed in intellect. To the annoyance of his relatives he nourished the design of being made a cardinal; he was lodged, for safety's sake, close to the family of his brother. From Ferriol's return in 1711 to his death in 1722, we have considerable difficulty in realising what Aïssé's existence was.

There is some reason to suppose that it was Lord Bolingbroke who first perceived the exceptional charm of Aïssé's mind. When the illustrious English exile came to France in 1715, he was almost immediately drawn into the society of the

Hôtel Ferriol. One of Aïssé's kindest friends was that wise and charming woman, the Marquise de Villette, whom Bolingbroke somewhat tardily married about 1720, and it was doubtless through her introduction that he became intimate with Madame de Ferriol. As early as 1719 Bolingbroke writes of Aïssé as of an intimate friend, and speaks of her as threatened by a " disadvantageous metamorphosis," by which he probably refers to an attack of the small-pox. It appears to have been during a visit to the château of Lord and Lady Bolingbroke that Aïssé first met Voltaire ; and later on we shall see that these persons played a singular but very important part in the drama of her life. There seems no doubt that, however little Madame de Villette and Lord Bolingbroke could claim the white flower of a spotless life, they were judicious and useful friends at this perilous moment of her career. Aïssé's beauty, which was extraordinary, and her dubious social station, made the young Circassian peculiarly liable to attack from the men of fashion who passed from alcove to alcove in search of the indulgence of some ephemeral caprice. The poets turned their rhymes in her honour, and one of their effusions, that of the Swiss Vernet, was so far esteemed that it was engraved fifty years afterwards underneath her portrait. It may thus be paraphrased :

Aïssé's beauty is all Greek ;
Yet was she wise in youth to borrow
From France the charming tongue we speak,
And wit, and airs that banish sorrow :

A theme like this deserves a verse
As warm and clear as mine is cold,
For has there been a heart like hers
Since our Astrean age of gold ?

Aïssé received all this homage unmoved. The Duke of Orleans one day met her in the salon of Madame de Parabère, was enchanted with her beauty, and declared his passion to Madame de Ferriol. To the lasting shame of this woman, she agreed to support his claim, and the Regent imagined that the little Greek would fall an easy prey. To his amazement, and to the indignation of Madame de Ferriol, he was indignantly repulsed : and when further pressure was brought to bear upon her, Aïssé threatened to retire at once to a convent if the proposition was so much as repeated. She was one of the principal attractions of Madame de Ferriol's salon, and, says the memoir, " as Aïssé was useful to her, fearing to lose her, she consented, though most unwillingly, to say no more to her " about the Duke. This was but one, though certainly the most alarming, of the traps set for her feet in the brilliant and depraved society of her guardians. The habitual life of the Tencins and Parabères of 1720 was something to us quite incredible. Such a " moral dialogue " as *Le Hasard au Coin du Feu* would be rejected as the dream of a licentious satirist, if the memoirs and correspondence of the Cidalises and the Clitandres of the age did not fully convince us that the novelists merely repeated what they saw around them. We must bear in mind what an extraordinary condition

of roseate semi-nudity this politest of generations lived in, to understand the excellence as well as the frailty of Aïssé. We must also bear in mind, when our Puritan indignation is ready to carry us away in profuse condemnation of this whole society, that extremely shrewd remark of Duclos : " Le peuple français est le seul peuple qui puisse perdre ses mœurs sans se corrompre."

In 1720 the old ex-ambassador fell ill. Aïssé immediately took up her abode with him, and nursed him assiduously until he died. That he was not an easy invalid to cherish we gather from a phrase in one of her own letters, as well as from hints in those of Bolingbroke. In October 1722 he died, leaving to Aïssé a considerable fortune in the form of an annuity, as well as a sum of money in a bill on the estate. The sister-in-law, Madame de Ferriol, to whose guardianship Aïssé had been consigned, thought her own sons injured by the ambassador's generosity, and had the extreme bad taste to upbraid Aïssé. The note had not yet been cashed, and at the first word from Madame de Ferriol, Aïssé fetched it and threw it into the fire. This little anecdote speaks worlds for the sensitive and independent character of the Circassian ; one almost blushes to complete it by adding that Madame de Ferriol took advantage of her ward's hasty act of injured pride. Aïssé, however, had other things to think of ; " the birthday of her life was come, her love was come to her." As early as 1721, we find Lord Bolingbroke saying, in a letter to Madame de Ferriol, " I fully expect you to

come; I even flatter myself that we shall see Madame du Deffand; but as for Mademoiselle Aïssé, I do not expect her. The Turk will be her excuse, and a certain Christian of my acquaintance her reason." This seems to mean that Aïssé would give as her excuse for not coming to stay with the Bolingbrokes that she was needed at the Ambassador's pillow; but that her real reason would be that she wished to stay in Paris to be near "a certain Christian." That which had been vainly attempted by so many august and eminent personages, namely, the capture of Aïssé's heart, was now being pursued with alarming success by a very modest candidate for her affections.

The Chevalier Blaise Marie d'Aydie, the hope of an impoverished Périgord family who claimed descent, with a blot on their escutcheon, from the noble house of Foix, was, in 1721, about thirty years of age. He had lived a passably dissipated life, after the fashion of the Clitandres of the age, and if Mademoiselle Rieu is to be believed, Madame la Duchesse de Berry herself had passed through the fires on his behalf. He was poor; he was brave and handsome and rather stupid; he was expected one of these days to break his vows as a Knight of Malta and redeem the family fortunes by a good marriage. We have a portrait of him by Madame du Deffand, written in her delicate, persistent way, touch upon touch, with a result that reminds one of Mr. Henry James's pictures of character. Voltaire, more rapidly and more enthusiastically, called him the "chevalier

sans peur et sans reproche," and drew him as the hero of his tragedy of *Adélaïde du Guesclin*. He had the superficial vices of his time ; but his tenderness, loyalty, and goodness of heart were infinite, and if we judge him by the morals of his own age and not of ours, he was a very fine fellow. His principal fault seems to have been that he was rather dull. As Madame du Deffand puts it, " They say of Fontenelle that instead of a heart he has a second brain ; one might believe that the head of the Chevalier contained another heart." All evidence goes to prove that from the moment when he first met Aïssé no other woman existed for him, and if their union was blameworthy, let it be at least admitted that it lasted, with impassioned fidelity on both sides, for twelve years and until Aïssé's death.

It would appear that until the Ambassador passed away, and the irksome life at the Hôtel Ferriol began again, Aïssé contrived to keep her ardent admirer within bounds. To us it seems amazingly perverse that the lovers did not marry ; but Aïssé herself was the first to insist that a Chevalier d'Aydie could not and should not offend his relations by a *mésalliance* with a Circassian slave. At last she yielded ; but, as Mademoiselle Rieu tells us, " he loved her so delicately that he was jealous of her reputation ; he adored her, and would have sacrificed everything for her ; while she, on her part, loving the Chevalier, found his fame, his fortune, his honour, dearer to her than her own." In 1724 she found

it absolutely necessary to disappear from her circle of acquaintance. She did not dare to confide her secret to the unscrupulous Madame de Ferriol, and in her despair she examined the circle of her friends for the most sympathetic face. She decided to trust Lady Bolingbroke, and she could not have made a wiser choice. That tender-hearted and deeply experienced lady was equal to the delicate emergency. She announced her intention of spending a few months in England, and she begged Madame de Ferriol to allow Aïssé to accompany her. They started as if for Calais, but only to double upon their steps. Aïssé, in company with her maid, Sophie, and a confidential English man-servant, was installed in a remote suburb of Paris, under the care of the Chevalier d'Aydie, while Lady Bolingbroke hastened on to England, and amused herself with inventing anecdotes and messages from Aïssé. In the fullness of time Lady Bolingbroke returned and took care to "collect" Aïssé before she presented herself at the Hôtel Ferriol. Meanwhile a daughter had been born, who was christened Célénie Leblond, and who was placed in a convent at Sens, under the name of Miss Black, as a niece of Lord Bolingbroke. The abbess of this convent was a Mademoiselle de Villette, the daughter of Lady Bolingbroke. No novelist would dare to describe so improbable a stratagem; let us make the story complete by adding that it succeeded to perfection, and that Madame de Ferriol herself never seems to have suspected the truth. This daughter, whom

we shall presently meet again, grew up to be a charming woman, and adorned society in the next generation as the Vicomtesse de Nanthia. If the story of Aïssé ended here it would not appeal to a Richardson, or even to an Abbé Prévost d'Exiles, as a moral tale.

Between 1723 and 1726 Aïssé's life passed quietly enough. The Chevalier d'Aydie was constantly at the Hôtel Ferriol, but the two lovers were not any longer in their first youth. A little prudence went a long way in a society adorned by Madame de Parabère and Madame de Tencin. No breath of scandal seems to have troubled Aïssé, and when her cares came, they all began from within. We do not possess the letters of Aïssé to her lover. I hope I am not a Philistine if I admit that I sincerely hope they will never be discovered. We possess the love letters of Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse; this should be enough of that kind of literature for one century at least—it would be a terrible thing to come down one morning to see announced a collection of the letters of Aïssé to her Chevalier, edited by M. Edmond de Goncourt! In the summer of 1726 there arrived from Geneva a lady about twenty years older than Aïssé, the wife of a M. Calandrini; she was a step-aunt, if such a relationship be recognised, of Lord Bolingbroke, and so was intimately connected with the Ferriol circle. Research, which really is far too busy in our days, has found out that Madame de Calandrini herself had not been all that could be desired; but in

1726 she was *dévote*, yet not to such an extent as to throw any barrier between herself and the confidences of a younger woman. Aïssé received her warmly, gave her heart to her without reserve, and when the lady went back to Geneva Aïssé discovered that she was the first and best friend that she had ever possessed. Madame Calandrini carried home with her the inmost and most dangerous secrets of Aïssé's history, and it is evident that she immediately planned her young friend's conversion.

The *Letters* of Aïssé are exclusively composed of her correspondence with this Madame Calandrini from the autumn of 1726 to her own fatal illness in January 1733. They remained in Geneva until, in 1758, they were lent to Voltaire, who enriched them with very interesting and important notes. Nearly thirty years more passed, and at length, in 1787, they saw the light. Next year they were reprinted, with a very delightful portrait of Aïssé. In this she appears as a decided beauty, with very fair hair, an elegant and spirited head lightly poised on delicate shoulders, and nothing Oriental in her appearance except the large, oval, dark eyes, languishing with incredible length of eyelash. The text was confused and difficult in these early editions, and in successive reprints has occupied various biographers—M. de Barante, M. Ravenel, M. Piedagnal. I suppose, however, that I do no injustice to those writers if I claim for M. Eugène Asse the credit of having done more than any other man, by patient annotation

and collection of explicatory documents, to render the reading of Aïssé's letters interesting and agreeable.

The letters of Aïssé to Madame Calandrini are the history of an awakening conscience. It is this fact, and the slow development of the inevitable moral plot, which give them their singular psychological value. As the letters approach their close, our attention is entirely riveted by the spectacle of this tender and passionate spirit tortured by remorse and yearning for expiation. But at the outset there is no moral passion expressed, and we think less of Aïssé herself than of the society to which she belonged by her age and education. As it seems impossible, from other sources of information, to believe that Madame Calandrini was what is commonly thought to be an amiable woman, we take from Aïssé's praise of her something of the same impression that we obtain from Madame de Sévigné's affectionate addresses to Madame de Grignan. Indeed, the opening letter of Aïssé's series, with its indescribable tone of the seventeenth century, reads so much like one of the Sévigné's letters to her daughter that one wonders whether the semblance can be wholly accidental. There is a childish archness in the way in which Aïssé jests about all her own adorers—the susceptible abbés, and the councillors whose neglected passion has comfortably subsided into friendship. There are little picturesque touches—the black spaniel yelping in his lady's lap, and upsetting the coffee-pot in

his eagerness to greet a newcomer. There are charming bits of self-portraiture: "I used to flatter myself that I was a little philosopher, but I never shall be one in matters of sentiment." It is all so youthful, so girlish, that we have to remind ourselves that the author of such a passage as the following was in her thirty-third year:

"I spend my days in shooting little birds; this does me a great deal of good. Exercise and distraction are excellent remedies for the vapours. The ardour of the chase makes me walk, although my feet are bruised; the perspiration that this exercise causes is good for me. I am as sunburned as a crow; you would be frightened if you saw me, but I scarcely mind it. How happy should I be if I were still with you! I would willingly give a pint of my blood if we could be together at this moment."

Here Aïssé anticipates by a year or two Matthew Green's famous "Fling but a stone, the giant dies." She has told Madame Calandrini everything. The Chevalier is away in Périgord, which adds to her vapours; but his letters breathe the sweetest constancy. She would like to send them to Geneva, but she dares not; they are too full of her own praises. She has been to see the first performance of a new comedy, *Pyrame et Thisbé*, and giggles over its disastrous fate. This gives us firm ground in dating this first letter, for this comedy, or rather opera, was played on the 17th of October 1726. Nothing could be more gay or sparkling than Aïssé's tone.

But soon there comes a change. We find that she is not happy in the Hôtel Ferriol. Her friend and foster-brother, Comte d'Argental, who lived on until 1788 to be the last survivor of her circle, is away "with his sweetheart in the Enchanted Island," and she has his room while hers is being refurnished. But it will cost her one hundred pistoles, for Madame de Ferriol makes her pay for everything. The subjects which she writes about in all light-heartedness are extraordinary. She cannot resist, from sheer ebullience of mirth, copying out a letter of amazing impudence written by a certain officer of dragoons to the bishop of his diocese. Can she or can she not continue to know the beautiful brazen Madame de Parabère, whose behaviour is of a lightness, but oh! of such a lightness? Yet "her carriage is always at my service, and don't you think it would be ridiculous not to visit her at all?" If one desires a marvellous tale of the ways and the manners of the great world under Louis XV., there is the astounding story of Madame la Princesse de Bournonville, and how she was publicly engaged to marry the Duc de Ruffec fifteen minutes after her first husband's death; it is told, with perfect calmness, in Aïssé's best manner. The Prince was one of Aïssé's numerous rejected adorers; she rejoices that he has left her no compromising legacy. There is a certain affair, on the 10th of January 1727, "which would make your hair stand on end; but it really is too infamous to be written down." A wonderful world, so elegant and so debased, so enthusiastic and so cynical, so

full of beauty and so full of corruption, that we find no name but Louis Quinze to qualify its paradoxes.

In her earlier letters Aïssé reveals herself as a patron of the stage, and a dramatic critic of marked views. Her foster-brothers, Pont-de-Veyle and Argental, were deeply stage-stricken; the "Enchanted Island" of the latter seems to have been situated somewhere in that ocean, the Théâtre de l'Opéra. Aïssé threw herself with heart and soul into the famous rivalry between the two operatic stars of Paris; she was all for the enchanting Lemaure, and when that public favourite wilfully retired to private life Aïssé found that the Pellissier "fait horriblement mal." She tells with infinite zest a rather scurrilous story of how a certain famous Jansenist canon, seventy years of age, fearing to die without having ever seen a dramatic performance, dressed himself up in his deceased grandmother's garments and made his appearance in the pit, creating, by his incredible oddity of garb and feature, such a sensation that the actor Armand stopped playing, and desired him, amid the shrieks of laughter of the audience, to decamp as fast as possible. Voltaire vouches for the absolute truth of this anecdote. But before Aïssé begins to lose the gaiety of her spirits it may be well to let her give in her own language, or as near as I can reach it, a sample of her powers as an artist in anecdote:

"A little while ago there happened a little adventure which has made a good deal of noise. I will tell you about it. Six weeks ago Isez, the surgeon [one of the most eminent practitioners of

his time] received a note, begging him, at six o'clock on the afternoon of the next day, to be in the Rue du Pot-de-Fer, close to the Luxembourg. He did not fail to be there ; he found waiting for him a man, who conducted him for a few steps, and then made him enter a house, shutting the door on the surgeon, so as, himself, to remain in the street. Isez was surprised that this man did not at once take him where he was wanted. But the *portier* of the house appeared, and told him that he was expected on the first floor, and asked him to step up, which he did. He opened an ante-chamber all hung with white ; a lackey, made to be put in a picture, dressed in white, nicely curled, nicely powdered, and with a pouch of white hair and two dusters in his hand, came to meet him, and told him that he must have his shoes wiped. After this ceremony, he was conducted into a room also hung with white. Another lackey, dressed like the first, went through the same ceremony with the shoes ; he was then taken into a room where everything was white, bed, carpet, tapestry, *fauteuils*, chairs, tables, and floor. A tall figure in a night-cap and a perfectly white dressing-gown, and a white mask, was seated near the fire. When this kind of phantom perceived Isez, he said to him, ' I have the devil in my body,' and spoke no more ; for three-quarters of an hour he did nothing but put on and pull off six pairs of white gloves which he had on a table by his side. Isez was frightened, but he grew more so when, glancing round the room, he saw several fire-arms ; he was taken with such a

trembling that he was obliged to sit down for fear of falling. At last, to break the silence, he asked the figure in white what was wanted of him, because he had an engagement, and his time belonged to the public. The white figure dryly replied, 'What does it matter to you, if you are paid well?' and said nothing more. Another quarter of an hour passed in silence; at last the phantom pulled the bell-rope. The two white lackeys reappeared; the phantom asked for bandages, and told Isez to draw five pounds of blood."

We must spoil the story by finishing it abruptly. Isez bleeds the phantom not in the arm, on account of the monstrous quantity of blood, but in the foot. a very beautiful woman's foot, apparently, when he gets to the last of six pairs of white silk stockings, He is presently, after various other adventures, turned out of the mysterious house, and nobody, not even the King himself, can tell what it all means.

But very soon the picture of Aïssé's life begins to be clouded over. In the spring of 1727, she is in a peck of troubles. The periodical reduction of the State annuities, which had been carried out once more during the preceding winter by the new Minister of Finance, had brought misery to many gentlefolks of France. In Aïssé's early letters, she and her acquaintances appear much as Irish landlords do now; in her latest letters they remind us of what these landlords would be if the National party realised its dream. The Chevalier does not seem to have been a sufferer personally; he had not much to lose, but we find him sympathising

with Aïssé, and drawing up an appealing letter for her to send to the Cardinal de Fleury. Aïssé begins to feel the shadows falling across her future. If ever she marries, she says, she will put into the contract a clause by which she retains the right to go to Geneva whenever she likes, for she longs to tell her troubles to Madame Calandrini. And thus is first sounded the mournful key to which we soon become accustomed:

"Every day I see that there is nothing but virtue that is any good for this world and the next. As for myself, who have not been lucky enough to behave properly, but who respect and admire virtuous people, the simple wish to belong to the number attracts to me all sorts of flattering things; the pity which everyone shows me [for her money losses, doubtless] almost prevents me from being miserable. I have just 2000 francs of income at most left. My jewels and my diamonds are sold."

The result of her sudden poverty appears to have been that the Chevalier d'Aydie, sorely against his inclination, but actuated by a generous impulse, offered to marry her. She was not less generous than he, and almost quixotically rejected what would have been her greatest satisfaction. To Madame Calandrini, who was plainly one of those who urged her to accept this act of restitution, the orphan-mother answers thus:

"Think, Madame, of what the world would say if he married a nobody, and one who depended entirely on the charity of the Ferriol family. No; I love his fame too much, and I have myself at the

same time too much pride, to allow him to commit such an act of folly. He would be sure to repent of having followed the bent of his absurd passion, and I could not survive the pain of having made him wretched, and of being myself no longer loved."

The Chevalier, unable to live in Paris without being at her side, fled for a five months' exile to the parental château in Périgord. Aïssé had expressed a mild surprise that he could not contrive to be more calm, but their discussions had always ended in a joke. Yet it is plain that all these circumstances made her regard life more seriously than she had ever done before. In her next letter (August 1727) we learn how miserable a home the Hôtel Ferriol had now become for her. " The mistress of this house," she says, " is much more difficult to live with than the poor Ambassador was." As for the Chevalier, he had scarcely reached Périgueux, when he forgot all about the months he wished to spend in the country, and hastened back to Paris to be near Aïssé. The latter writes, in her prim way, " I admit I was very agreeably surprised to see him enter my room yesterday. How happy I should be if I could only love him without having to reproach myself for it ! " It is plain, in spite of the always modest, and now timid way in which she writes, that her moral worth and delicate judgement were estimated at their true value even by the frivolous women who surrounded her. The Duchess of Fitz-James asks her advice as to whether she shall or shall not accept the hand of the Duc d'Aumont. The

dissolute Madame de Tencin cannot forgive or forget Aïssé's tacit disapproval of her conduct. The gentler, but not less naughty, Madame de Parabère purrs around her like a cat, exquisitely assiduous not entirely to lose the esteem of one whose position in the world can have offered nothing to such a personage, but by whose intelligence and sympathetic goodness she could not help being fascinated. In recording all this, without in the least being aware of it, Aïssé gives us an impression of her own simple sweetness as of a touchstone by which radically evil natures were distinguished from those whose voluntary abasement was not the sign of a complete corruption of spirit.

We are made to feel in Aïssé's letters, that, without being in any degree a blue-stocking, she was eager to form her own impression on the various intellectual questions of the hour. *Gulliver's Travels* had only been published in England in the autumn of 1726; in the spring of 1727 Aïssé had read it, in Desfontaine's translation, knew that it was the work of Swift, and praised it in the very same terms that the world has since agreed to bestow upon it. Destouches seems to have been a friend of hers, but when in the same year she went to see his new comedy, *Le Philosophe Marié*, she was not blinded by friendship. "It is a very charming comedy," she wrote, "full of sentiment, full of delicacy; but it does not possess the genius of Molière." Nor is she less judicious in what she says about the

masterpiece of another friend, the Abbé Prévost d'Exiles. She writes in October 1728: "We have a new book here entitled *Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité retiré du Monde*, it is not worth much, except one hundred and ninety pages which make one burst out crying." These one hundred and ninety pages were that immortal supplement to a dull book which we call *Manon Lescaut*, over which as many tears are shed nowadays as were dropped a century and a half ago. It is said by those who have read Prévost's forgotten romance, *Histoire d'une Grecque Moderne*, published long afterwards in 1741, that it contains a full-length portrait of the author's old friend Aïssé. It might be amusing to compare this with Voltaire's portrait of her chevalier in *Adélaïde du Guesclin*.

She was evidently a centre of light and activity. The young woman with whom, at all events during certain periods, Bolingbroke corresponded by every post, could be no commonplace person. Voltaire vouches for her exact and independent knowledge of events. When Madame Calandrini is anxious to know how a certain incident at court will turn out, Aïssé says, "You shall know before the people who make the Gazette do," and her letters differ from the poet Gray's, which otherwise they often curiously resemble, that she seems to know at first hand the class of news that Gray only repeats. She sometimes shows her first-hand knowledge by her very inaccuracy. She gives, for instance, a long account, which we follow with breathless interest, of the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur, the event,

probably, which moved Paris more vehemently than any other during the year 1730. Aïssé directly charges the young Duchesse de Bouillon with the murder of the actress, and supports her charge with an amazing array of horrible details. The affair was mysterious, and Aïssé was evidently minutely informed ; yet Voltaire, in whose arms Adrienne Lecouvreur died, declares that her account is not the true one. On one point her knowledge of her contemporaries is very useful to us. The priceless correspondence of Madame du Deffand makes the latter, as an old woman, an exceedingly life-like figure, but we know little of her early life ; Aïssé's sketches of her, therefore, and to say the truth, cruelly penetrating analysis of her character at the age of thirty, are most valuable. The Madame du Deffand we know seems a wiser woman than Aïssé's friend ; but the fact is that many of these witty Frenchwomen only became tolerable, like remarkable vintages, when they were growing a little crusted.

Among the brightest sections of Aïssé's correspondence are those in which she speaks of her high-spirited and somewhat dissolute foster-brothers, Pont-de-Veyle and D'Argental. These two men were sowing their wild oats very hard, in the fashion of the day, and although they were passing the solemn age of thirty, the sacks seemed inexhaustible. But so far as regarded Aïssé, their conduct was all that was chivalrous, all that was honourably fraternal. Pont-de-Veyle she calls an angel, but it was D'Argental whom she loved

the most, and nothing is more touching than an account she gives, with the *naïveté* of a child, of a quarrel she had with him. This quarrel lasted eight days, and Aïssé kept her letter open until she could add, in a postscript, the desired information that, she having drunk his health at dinner and afterwards kissed him, they have made it up without any formal explanation. "Since then," she adds in that tone of hers which makes the eyes of a middle-aged citizen of perfidious Albion quite dim after a hundred and fifty years, "Since then we have been a great deal together."

In 1728 she had need of all the kindness she could get. The Chevalier was so ill in June that she was obliged to face the prospect of his death. "Duty, love, inquietude, and friendship, are for ever troubling my thoughts and my body; I am in a cruel agitation; my body is giving way, for I am overwhelmed with vapours and with grief; and, if any misfortune should happen to that man, I feel I should not be able to endure the horrible sorrow of it. He is more attached to me than ever; he encourages me to perform my duties. Sometimes I cannot help telling him, that if he gets any worse it will be impossible for me to leave him; and then he scolds me." The dreadful condition of genteel poverty in which the Ferriol family were now living did not tend to make Aïssé's home a bed of roses. In the winter of 1728 these famous people of quality were "dying of hunger." There was not, that is to say, as much food upon their table as their appetites

required, and Aïssé expected to share the fate of the horse whose master gave him one grain less of oats each day until he died from starvation. In this there was of course a little playful exaggeration, but her poverty weighed heavily on Aïssé. She had scarcely enough money for her daily wants, and envied the Chevalier, who was saving that he might form a dowry for the little daughter at Sens, the "*pauvre petite*" in the convent, after whom Aïsse's heart yearned, and whom she might but very rarely visit as a stranger.

She spent the autumn of 1729 at Pont-de-Veyle, the country seat of the Ferriol family, a château between Macon and Bourg. She took advantage of this neighbourhood to Switzerland, and paid the long-promised visit to Madame Calandrini in Geneva. The incident was a momentous one in the history of her soul. She came back more uneasy, more irresolute than ever, and in deep depression of spirits. Her first instinct, on being left to her own thoughts again, was to enter a convent, but Madame Calandrini did not encourage this idea, and Aïssé soon relinquished it. She saw, herself, that duty called her to stay with Madame de Ferriol, who was now growing an invalid. Before leaving Geneva Madame Calandrini had made a solemn attempt to persuade her to conclude her dubious relations with the Chevalier. She tried to extract a promise from Aïssé that she would either marry D'Aydie or cease to see him. But it is easy for comfortable matrons in their own boudoirs to urge a line of conduct; it is less simple

for the unfortunate to carry out these maxims in the hard light of day. Aïssé wrote: "All that I can promise you is that nothing shall be spared to bring about one or other of these things. But, Madame, it may cost me my life." Such words are lightly said: but in Aïssé's case they came from the heart. She made the sacrifice, and it did cost her her life. She attempted to melt the severe censor at Geneva by extracts from the Chevalier's letters, and finally she made an appeal which goes straight to our sympathy. "How can I cut to the quick a violent passion, and the tenderest and firmest friendship? Add to all this, gratitude: it is frightful! Death would not be worse! However, since you wish me to make an effort, I will do so." Conscience and the Calandrini were inexorable.

In the dull house at Pont-de-Veyle Aïssé was thrown upon her own consciousness more than in Paris. She gives us a picture of her dreary existence. The Archbishop of Lyons, who was Madame de Ferriol's brother, was the only intelligent companion she had, and he was locked up all day with Jesuit priests. The young Ferriols were in Paris; their mother, jealous, pietistic, and peevish, wore Aïssé out with *ennui*. It was in this tension of the nervous system, this irritation and depression of spirits, that on her way back to Paris in November she paid a stolen visit to Sens to see her little daughter. The letter in which she describes the interview is simply heartrending. The little delicate child, with an exquisite instinct, clung to this unknown friend, and when at last

Aïssé had to say farewell, her daughter—whom she must not call her daughter—wrung the mother's heart with mingled anguish and delight by throwing her arms round her neck and crying out, " I have no father or mother; please, you be my mother, for I love you as much as if you really were!" Aïssé could not tear herself away; she remained a fortnight at the convent, more unhappy than happy, and so afflicted in spirits that she positively had to take to her bed. The little " Miss Black " waited upon her with a child's enthusiasm, refusing to play with her companions, and lavishing her caresses upon her. At last the poor mother forced herself to depart, fearing lest she should expose her secret by her emotion. She made her way to Paris, where she found the Chevalier waiting for her, and all her good resolutions were shattered by the passionate joy of his welcome. She did not know what to do or where to turn.

In the beginning of 1730 the Chevalier had another dangerous illness, and Aïssé was obliged to postpone the crisis. He got well and she was so happy that she could not but postpone it a little longer. Slowly, as she herself perceived, her bodily strength began to waste away under the agitations of her conscience. We may pass over the slow progress of the spiritual complaint, which took more than three years to destroy her healthy constitution. We must push on to the end. In 1732 her health gave serious alarm to all those who surrounded her. That few of her friends suspected the real state of the case, or the hidden griefs that

were destroying her, is proved among other things by a little copy of verses which has been preserved in the works of a great man. Voltaire, who made a joke of his own supposed passion for Aïssé, sent her in 1732 a packet of ratafia, to relieve a painful symptom of her complaint, and he accompanied it by a flippant versicle, which may thus be rendered :

Hence ! Through her veins like subtle anguish fleet !
Change to desires the snows that thro' them roll !
So may she feel the heat
That burns within my soul.

But the women about her knew that she was dying. The Parabère to whom we may forgive much, because she loved Aïssé so well, fluttered around her with pathetic tenderness ; and we find her forcing upon her friend the most beautiful of her personal possessions, a splendid box of crimson jasper. Even Madame de Tencin, whom she had always kept at arm's length, and who had rewarded her with aversion, startled her now with expressions and proofs of affection. Madame de Ferriol herself, with her sharp temper and her ugly speeches, urged upon her the attentions of a Jansenist confessor. The Chevalier, understanding at last that he was about to lose her, was distracted with anxiety, and hung around the room until the ladies were put to their wits' end to get rid of him. In her next letter, written about Christmas of 1732, Aïssé expresses herself thus :

" I have to be very careful how I deal with you know whom. He has been talking to me about a

certain matter as reasonably and affectionately as possible. All his goodness, his delicate way of thinking, loving me for my own self, the interest of the poor little one, to whom one could not give a position, all these things force me to be very careful how I deal with him. For a long time I have been tortured with remorse; the carrying out of this would sustain me. If the Chevalier does not keep to what he has promised, I will see him no more. You see, Madame, what my resolutions are; I will keep to them. But they will probably shorten my life."

The explanation of this passage seems to be that the Chevalier, having put off marriage so long, was anxious not to break his vows for a merely sentimental union, that could last but a few weeks. She had extracted, it would seem, a sort of promise from him, but he did not keep it, and Aïssé died unmarried.

In her last hours Aïssé became completely *dévote* but not to such an extent as to be unable to see the humour of sending such light ladies as Madame de Parabère and Madame du Deffand through the length and breadth of Paris to search for a director to undertake her conversion. At last these inexperienced emissaries discovered a Père Boursault, who was perhaps of their world, for he was the son of the dramatist, the enemy of Molière; from him Aïssé received the consolations of religion. A few days before she died she wrote once more to Madame Calandrini, and these are the last words which we possess from the pen of Aïssé:

" I say nothing to you about the Chevalier. He is in despair at seeing me so ill. You never witnessed a passion so violent, more delicacy, more sentiment, more greatness and generosity. I am not anxious about the poor little one ; she has a friend and protector who loves her tenderly. Good-bye, dear Madame ; I am too weak to write any more. It is still infinitely sweet to me to think of you ; but I cannot yield to this happiness without tears, my dear friend. The life I have led has been very wretched. Have I ever had a moment's enjoyment ? I could not be happy alone ; I was afraid to think ; my remorse has never once left me since the instant when I began to have my eyes open to my misconduct. Why should I be alarmed at my soul being separated, since I am persuaded that God is all good, and that the moment when I begin to enjoy happiness will be that in which I leave this miserable body ? "

On the 14th of March 1733, Charlotte Elizabeth Aïssé, spinster, aged about forty years, was buried in the chapel of the Ferriol family, in the Church of St. Roch, in Paris.

THE END

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3. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of a SUPER-TRAMP by W. H. Davies. With a preface by G. BERNARD SHAW

¶ Printed as it was written, it is worth reading for its literary style alone. The author tells us with inimitable quiet modesty of how he begged and stole his way across America and through England and Wales until his travelling days were cut short by losing his right foot while attempting to 'jump' a train.

4. BABBITT A Novel
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¶ 'One of the greatest novels I have read for a long time.' *H. G. Wells* 'Babbitt is a triumph.' *Hugh Walpole* 'His work has that something extra, over and above, which makes the work of art, and it is signed in every line with the unique personality of the author.' *Rebecca West*

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¶ 'No more substantial or more charming volume of criticism has been published in our time.' *Observer*
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6. EARLHAM
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¶ 'The book seems too intimate to be reviewed. We want to be allowed to read it, and to dream over it, and keep silence about it. His judgment is perfect, his humour is true and ready; his touch light and prim; his prose is exact and clean and full of music.' *Times*

7. WIDE SEAS & MANY LANDS A Personal Narrative
by Arthur Mason.
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¶ 'This is an extremely entertaining, and at the same time, moving book. We are in the presence of a born writer. We read with the same mixture of amazement and delight that fills us throughout a Conrad novel.' *New Statesman*

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¶ 'He is exactly the kind of man we are needing, an iconoclast, a scoffer at ideals, a critic with whips and scorpions who does not hesitate to deal with literary, social and political humbugs in the one slashing fashion.' *English Review*

9. THE MIND IN THE MAKING An Essay
by James Harvey Robinson

¶ 'For me, I think James Harvey Robinson is going to be almost as important as was Huxley in my adolescence, and William James in later years. It is a cardinal book. I question whether in the long run people may not come to it, as making a new initiative into the world's thought and methods.' *From the Introduction by* H. G. WELLS

10. THE WAY OF ALL FLESH A Novel
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'It drives one almost to despair of English Literature when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as Butler's posthumous *Way of All Flesh* making so little impression. Really, the English do not deserve to have great men.' *George Bernard Shaw*

11. EREWHON A Satire
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'To lash the age, to ridicule vain pretension, to expose hypocrisy, to deride humbug in education, politics and religion, are tasks beyond most men's powers; but occasionally, very occasionally, a bit of genuine satire secures for itself more than a passing nod of recognition. *Erewhon* is such a satire. . . . The best of its kind since *Gulliver's Travels*.' *Augustine Birrell*

12. EREWHON REVISITED A Satire
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'He waged a sleepless war with the mental torpor of the prosperous, complacent England around him; a Swift with the soul of music in him, and completely sane; a liberator of humanity operating with the wit and malice and coolness of Mephistopheles.' *Manchester Guardian*

13. ADAM AND EVE AND PINCH ME Stories
by A. E. Coppard

¶ Mr. Coppard's implicit theme is the closeness of the spiritual world to the material; the strange, communicative sympathy which strikes through two temperaments and suddenly makes them one. He deals with those sudden impulses under which secrecy is broken down for a moment, and personality revealed as under a flash of spiritual lightning.

14. DUBLINERS A volume of Stories
by James Joyce

¶ A collection of fifteen short stories by the author of *Ulysses*. They are all of them brave, relentless, and sympathetic pictures of Dublin life; realistic, perhaps, but not crude; analytical, but not repugnant. No modern writer has greater significance than Mr. Joyce, whose conception and practice of the short story is certainly unique and certainly vital.

15. DOG AND DUCK
by Arthur Machen

¶ 'As a literary artist, Mr. Arthur Machen has few living equals, and that is very far indeed from being his only, or even his greatest, claim on the suffrages of English readers.' *Sunday Times*

16. KAI LUNG'S GOLDEN HOURS
by Ernest Bramah

¶ 'It is worthy of its forerunner. There is the same plan, exactitude, working-out and achievement; and therefore complete satisfaction in the reading.' *From the Preface by* HILAIRE BELLOC

17. ANGELS & MINISTERS, AND OTHER PLAYS
by Laurence Housman

Imaginary portraits of political characters done in dialogue—Queen Victoria, Disraeli, Gladstone, Parnell, Joseph Chamberlain, and Woodrow Wilson.

¶ 'It is all so good that one is tempted to congratulate Mr. Housman on a true masterpiece.' *Times*

18. THE WALLET OF KAI LUNG
by Ernest Bramah

¶ 'Something worth doing and done.... It was a thing intended, wrought out, completed and established. Therefore it was destined to endure, and, what is more important, it was a success.' *Hilaire Belloc*

19. TWILIGHT IN ITALY
by D. H. Lawrence

¶ This volume of travel vignettes in North Italy was first published in 1916. Since then Mr. Lawrence has increased the number of his admirers year by year. In *Twilight in Italy* they will find all the freshness and vigour of outlook which they have come to expect from its author.

20. THE DREAM A Novel
by H. G. Wells

¶ 'It is the richest, most generous and absorbing thing that Mr. Wells has given us for years and years.' *Daily News*

'I find this book as close to being magnificent as any book that I have ever read. It is full of inspiration and life.' *Daily Graphic*

21. ROMAN PICTURES
by Percy Lubbock

¶ Pictures of life as it is lived—or has been or might be lived—among the pilgrims and colonists in Rome of more or less English speech.

'A book of whimsical originality and exquisite workmanship, and worthy of one of the best prose writers of our time.' *Sunday Times*

22. CLORINDA WALKS IN HEAVEN
by A. E. Coppard

¶ 'Genius is a hard-ridden word, and has been put by critics at many puny ditches, but Mr. Coppard sets up a fence worthy of its mettle. He shows that in hands like his the English language is as alive as ever, and that there are still infinite possibilities in the short story.' *Outlook*

23. MARIUS THE EPICUREAN
by Walter Pater

¶ Walter Pater was at the same time a scholar of wide sympathies and a master of the English language. In this, his best known work, he describes with rare delicacy of feeling and insight the religious and philosophic tendencies of the Roman Empire at the time of Antoninus Pius as they affected the mind and life of the story's hero.

24. THE WHITE SHIP Stories
by Aino Kallas
With an Introduction by JOHN GALSWORTHY

¶ 'The writer has an extraordinary sense of atmosphere.'
Times Literary Supplement

'Stories told convincingly and well, with a keen perception for natural beauty.' *Nation*

25. MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE A Novel
by John Masefield

¶ 'As well conceived and done, as rich in observation of the world, as profound where it needs to be profound, as any novel of recent writing.' *Outlook*

'This is no common book. It is a book which not merely touches vital things. It is vital.' *Daily News*

26. SPRING SOWING Stories
by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ 'Nothing seems to escape Mr. O'Flaherty's eye; his brain turns all things to drama; and his vocabulary is like a river in spate. *Spring Sowing* is a book to buy, or to borrow, or, yes, to steal.' *Bookman*

27. WILLIAM A Novel
by E. H. Young

¶ 'An extraordinary good book, penetrating and beautiful.'
Allan Monkhouse

'All its characters are very real and alive, and William himself is a masterpiece.' *May Sinclair*

28. THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS
by Sarah Orne Jewett

¶ 'The young student of American literature in the far distant future will take up this book and say "a masterpiece!" as proudly as if he had made it. It will be a message in a universal language—the one message that even the scythe of Time spares.'
From the Preface by WILLA CATHER

29. GRECIAN ITALY
by Henry James Forman

¶ 'It has been said that if you were shown Taormina in a vision you would not believe it. If the reader has been in Grecian Italy before he reads this book, the magic of its pages will revive old memories and induce a severe attack of nostalgia.' *From the Preface by* H. FESTING JONES

30. WUTHERING HEIGHTS
by Emily Brontë

¶ 'It is a very great book. You may read this grim story of lost and thwarted human creatures on a moor at any age and come under its sway.' *From the Introduction by* ROSE MACAULAY

31. ON A CHINESE SCREEN
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ A collection of sketches of life in China. Mr. Somerset Maugham writes with equal certainty and vigour whether his characters are Chinese or European. There is a tenderness and humour about the whole book which makes the reader turn eagerly to the next page for more.

32. A FARMER'S LIFE
by George Bourne

¶ The life story of a tenant-farmer of fifty years ago in which the author of *The Bettesworth Book* and *The Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* draws on his memory for a picture of the every-day life of his immediate forebears, the Smiths, farmers and handicraft men, who lived and died on the border of Surrey and Hampshire.

33. TWO PLAYS. *The Cherry Orchard & The Sea Gull*
by Anton Tchekoff. Translated by George Calderon

¶ Tchekoff had that fine comedic spirit which relishes the incongruity between the actual disorder of the world with the underlying order. He habitually mingled tragedy (which is life seen close at hand) with comedy (which is life seen at a distance). His plays are tragedies with the texture of comedy.

34. THE MONK AND THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER
by Ambrose Bierce

¶ 'They are stories which the discerning are certain to welcome. They are evidence of very unusual powers, and when once they have been read the reader will feel himself impelled to dig out more from the same pen.' *Westminster Gazette*

35. CAPTAIN MARGARET A Novel
by John Masefield

¶ 'His style is crisp, curt and vigorous. He has the Stevensonian sea-swagger, the Stevensonian sense of beauty and poetic spirit. Mr. Masefield's descriptions ring true and his characters carry conviction.' *The Observer*

36. BLUE WATER
by Arthur Sturges Hildebrand

¶ This book gives the real feeling of life on a small cruising yacht; the nights on deck with the sails against the sky, long fights with head winds by mountainous coasts to safety in forlorn little island ports, and constant adventure free from care.

37. STORIES FROM DE MAUPASSANT
Translated by Elizabeth Martindale

¶ 'His "story" engrosses the non-critical, it holds the critical too at the first reading. . . . That is the real test of art, and it is because of the inobtrusiveness of this workmanship, that for once the critic and the reader may join hands without awaiting the verdict of posterity.' *From the Introduction by* FORD MADOX FORD

38. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS First Series
by Henry Lawson

¶ These stories are written by the O. Henry of Australia. They tell of men and dogs, of cities and plains, of gullies and ridges, of sorrow and happiness, and of the fundamental goodness that is hidden in the most unpromising of human soil.

39. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS Second Series
by Henry Lawson

¶ Mr. Lawson has the uncanny knack of making the people he writes about almost violently alive. Whether he tells of jackeroos, bush children or drovers' wives, each one lingers in the memory long after we have closed the book.

41. IN MOROCCO
by Edith Wharton

¶ Morocco is a land of mists and mysteries, of trailing silver veils through which minarets, mighty towers, hot palm groves and Atlas snows peer and disappear at the will of the Atlantic cloud-drifts.

42. GLEANINGS IN BUDDHA-FIELDS
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ A book which is readable from first page to last, and is full of suggestive thought, the essays on Japanese religious belief calling for special praise for the earnest spirit in which the subject is approached.

43. OUT OF THE EAST
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Mr. Hearn has written many books about Japan ; he is saturated with the essence of its beauty, and in this book the light and colour and movement of that land drips from his pen in every delicately conceived and finely written sentence.

44. KWAIDAN
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ The marvellous tales which Mr. Hearn has told in this volume illustrate the wonder-living tendency of the Japanese. The stories are of goblins, fairies and sprites, with here and there an adventure into the field of unveiled supernaturalism.

45. THE CONQUERED
by Naomi Mitchison
A story of the Gauls under Cæsar

¶ 'With *The Conquered* Mrs. Mitchison establishes herself as the best, if not the only, English historical novelist now writing. It seems to me in many respects the most attractive and poignant historical novel I have ever read.' *New Statesman*

46. WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS
by Naomi Mitchison

Stories of the time when Rome was crumbling to ruin

¶ 'Interesting, delightful, and fresh as morning dew. The connoisseur in short stories will turn to some pages in this volume again and again with renewed relish.' *Times Literary Supplement*

47. THE FLYING BO'SUN
by Arthur Mason

¶ 'What makes the book remarkable is the imaginative power which has re-created these events so vividly that even the supernatural ones come with the shock and the conviction with which actual supernatural events might come.' *From the Introduction by* EDWIN MUIR

48. LATER DAYS
by W. H. Davies

A pendant to *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*

¶ 'The self-portrait is given with disarming, mysterious, and baffling directness, and the writing has the same disarmingness and simpleness.' *Observer*

49. THE EYES OF THE PANTHER Stories
by Ambrose Bierce

¶ It is said that these tales were originally rejected by virtually every publisher in the country. Bierce was a strange man; in 1914 at the age of seventy-one he set out for Mexico and has never been heard of since. His stories are as strange as his life, but this volume shows him as a master of his art.

50. IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'All I design by the book is to set down in more or less plain form certain ideas that practically every civilized man and woman holds *in petto*, but that have been concealed hitherto by the vast mass of sentimentalities swathing the whole woman question.' *From the Author's Introduction*

51. VIENNESE MEDLEY A Novel
by Edith O'Shaughnessy

¶ 'It is told with infinite tenderness, with many touches of grave or poignant humour, in a very beautiful book, which no lover of fiction should allow to pass unread. A book which sets its writer definitely in the first rank of living English novelists.'
Sunday Times

52. PRECIOUS BANE A Novel
by Mary Webb

¶ 'She has a style of exquisite beauty; which yet has both force and restraint, simplicity and subtlety; she has fancy and wit, delicious humour and pathos. She sees and knows men aright as no other novelist does. She has, in short, genius.' *Mr. Edwin Pugh*

53. THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND
by Mrs. R. S. Garnett

¶ This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of every-day life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.

54. HORSES AND MEN
by Sherwood Anderson

¶ '*Horses and Men* confirms our indebtedness to the publishers who are introducing his work here. It has a unity beyond that of its constant Middle-west setting. A man of poetic vision, with an intimate knowledge of particular conditions of life, here looks out upon a world that seems singularly material only because he unflinchingly accepts its actualities.' *Morning Post*

55. SELECTED ESSAYS
by Samuel Butler

¶ This volume contains the following essays:

The Humour of Homer
Quis Desiderio . . .?
Ramblings in Cheapside
The Aunt, the Nieces, and the Dog
How to Make the Best of Life
The Sanctuary of Montrigone
A Medieval Girls' School
Art in the Valley of Saas
Thought and Language

56. A POET'S PILGRIMAGE
by W. H. Davies

¶ *A Poet's Pilgrimage* recounts the author's impressions of his native Wales on his return after many years' absence. He tells of a walking tour during which he stayed in cheap rooms and ate in the small wayside inns. The result is a vivid picture of the Welsh people, the towns and countryside.

57. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. First Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Most books written about Japan have been superficial sketches of a passing traveller. Of the inner life of the Japanese we know practically nothing, their religion, superstitions, ways of thought. Lafcadio Hearn reveals something of the people and their customs as they are.

58. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. Second Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Sketches by an acute observer and a master of English prose, of a Nation in transition—of the lingering remains of Old Japan, to-day only a memory, of its gardens, its beliefs, customs, gods and devils, of its wonderful kindliness and charm—and of the New Japan, struggling against odds towards new ideals.

59. THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO
Edited by Manuel Komroff

¶ When Marco Polo arrived at the court of the Great Khan, Pekin had just been rebuilt. Kublai Khan was at the height of his glory. Polo rose rapidly in favour and became governor of an important district. In this way he gained first-hand knowledge of a great civilization and described it with astounding accuracy and detail.

60. SELECTED PREJUDICES. Second Series
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'What a master of the straight left in appreciation! Everybody who wishes to see how common sense about books and authors can be made exhilarating should acquire this delightful book.'
Morning Post

61. THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS
by Max Murray
With an introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO

¶ This book is not an account so much of places as of people. The journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshore man and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

62. THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL
by J. Middleton Murry

¶ These essays were written during and immediately after the Great War. The author says that they record the painful stages by which he passed from the so-called intellectual state to the state of being what he now considers to be a reasonable man.

63. THE RENAISSANCE
by Walter Pater

¶ This English classic contains studies of those 'supreme artists,' Michelangelo and Da Vinci, and of Botticelli, Della Robia, Mirandola, and others, who 'have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere.' There is no romance or subtlety in the work of these masters too fine for Pater to distinguish in superb English.

64. THE ADVENTURES OF A WANDERER
by Sydney Walter Powell

¶ Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambulance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered all over the world.

65. 'RACUNDRA'S' FIRST CRUISE
by Arthur Ransome

¶ This is the story of the building of an ideal yacht which would be a cruising boat that one man could manage if need be, but on which three people could live comfortably. The adventures of the cruise are skilfully and vividly told.

66. THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN
by Winwood Reade

¶ 'Few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced me very strongly is *The Martyrdom of Man*. This "dates," as people say, nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own; but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process.' *H. G. Wells* in *The Outline of History*.

67. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD
With an introduction by H. W. MASSINGHAM

¶ Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader's.

68. THE DELIVERANCE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

69. THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ 'Since Bunyan, English Puritanism has produced one imaginative genius of the highest order. To my mind, our fiction contains no more perfectly drawn pictures of English life in its recurring emotional contrast of excitement and repose more valuable to the historian, or more stimulating to the imaginative reader.' *H. W. Massingham*

70. ASPECTS OF SCIENCE. First Series
by J. W. N. Sullivan

¶ Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas, the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

71. MASTRO-DON GESUALDO
Giovanni Verga. Translated by D. H. Lawrence

¶ Verga, who died in 1922, is recognized as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine, full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

72. THE MISSES MALLETT
by E. H. Young

¶ The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing; to summarize it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

73. SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ 'The prose of Sir Edmund Gosse is as rich in the colour of young imagination as in the mellow harmony of judgment. Sir Edmund Gosse's literary kit-kats will continue to be read with avidity long after the greater part of the academic criticism of the century is swept away upon the lumber-heap.' *Daily Telegraph*

74. WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS
by Christopher Morley

¶ A delicious satirical fantasy, in which humanity wears a dog-collar.

'Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

75. JAVA HEAD
by Joseph Hergesheimer

¶ The author has created a connoisseur's world of his own; a world of colourful bric-à-brac—of ships and rustling silks and old New England houses—a world in which the rarest and most perplexing of emotions are caught and expressed for the perceptible moment as in austerely delicate porcelain. *Java Head* is a novel of grave and lasting beauty.

76. CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN
by George Moore

¶ 'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' *Humbert Wolfe*

77. THE BAZAAR. Stories
by Martin Armstrong

¶ 'These stories have considerable range of subject, but in general they are stay-at-home tales, depicting cloistered lives and delicate finely fibred minds. . . . Mr. Armstrong writes beautifully.' *Nation and Athenæum*

78. SIDE SHOWS. Essays
by J. B. Atkins
With an Introduction by JAMES BONE

¶ Mr. J. B. Atkins was war correspondent in four wars, the London editor of a great English paper, then Paris correspondent of another, and latterly the editor of the *Spectator*. His subjects in *Side Shows* are briefly London and the sea.

79. SHORT TALKS WITH THE DEAD
by Hilaire Belloc

¶ In these essays Mr. Belloc attains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. The subjects vary widely and include an imaginary talk with the spirits of Charles I, the barber of Louis XIV, and Napoleon, Venice, fakes, eclipses, Byron and the famous dissertation on the Nordic Man.

80. ORIENT EXPRESS
by John dos Passos

¶ This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History, manifesting itself as usual by plague, famine, murder, sudden death and depreciated currency. Underneath the book is an ode to railroad travel.

81. SELECTED ESSAYS. Second Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ 'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*.

84. SMOKE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale
by du Bose Heyward

¶ This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
by Sisley Huddleston

¶ 'There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopædia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta
by Naomi Mitchison

¶ 'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS
by Stephen Graham

¶ In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT
by Christopher Morley

¶ 'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE
by Somerset Maugham

¶ A remarkable picture of a genius.
'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

93. A POOR MAN'S HOUSE
by Stephen Reynolds

¶ Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' *Joseph Conrad*

94. WILLIAM BLAKE
by Arthur Symons

¶ When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

95. A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND
by Edward Thomas

¶ A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

96. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE
by The Earl of Rosebery

¶ Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

97. THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR
Compiled by Edward Thomas

¶ This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

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With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

¶ Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the rôle of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought

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¶ Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Verse*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

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by W. G. Waters

¶ This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

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¶ A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters. The essays have the feeling of the sea in them ; they also have something of its romance.

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